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OF HILLARY CLINTON BY KATE O'BEIRNE

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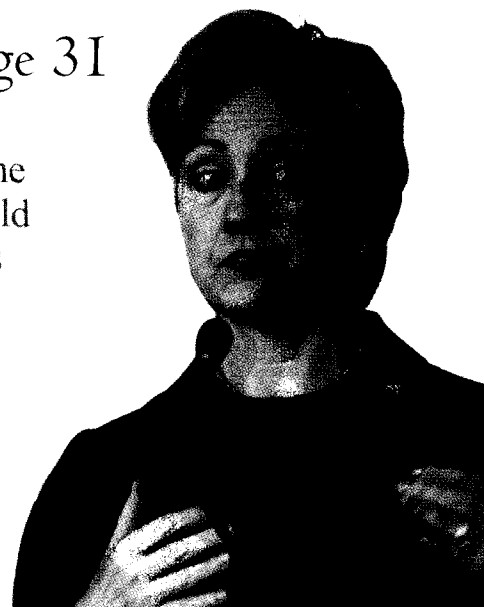
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■ COVER STORY

Hillary Prepares

Hillary Clinton looks like a sure bet for reelection to the Senate next year, and surveys show her lapping the field of potential Democratic presidential candidates. She is widely admired as a clever, centrist consensus-builder. A top Republican strategist warns his party, "We underestimate her at our peril." But while it's true that no Clinton should ever be underestimated, neither should Democrats underestimate the formidable obstacle Hillary Clinton's presidential production faces: its lead. *By Kate O'Beirne*

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NATIONAL REVIEW (ISSN: 0028-0038) is published bi-weekly, except for the first issue in January, by NATIONAL REVIEW, Inc., at 215 Lexington Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016. Periodicals postage paid at New York, N.Y., and additional mailing offices. ©National Review, Inc., 2005. Address all editorial mail, manuscripts, letters to the editor, etc., to Editorial Dept., NATIONAL REVIEW, 215 Lexington Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016. Address all subscription mail orders, changes of address, undeliverable copies, etc., to NATIONAL REVIEW, Circulation Dept., P. O. Box 668, Mount Morris, Ill. 61054-0668; phone, 815-734-1232, Monday-Friday, 8:00 A.M. to 10:30 P.M. Eastern time. Adjustment requests should be accompanied by a current mailing label or facsimile. Direct classified advertising inquiries to: Classifieds Dept., NATIONAL REVIEW, 215 Lexington Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016 or call 212-679-7330. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to NATIONAL REVIEW, Circulation Dept., P. O. Box 668, Mount Morris, Ill. 61054-0668. Printed in the U.S.A.

RATES: \$59.00 a year (24 issues). Add \$21.50 for Canada and other foreign subscriptions, per year. (All payments in U.S. currency.) The editors cannot be responsible for unsolicited manuscripts or artwork unless return postage or, better, a stamped self-addressed envelope is enclosed. Opinions expressed in signed articles do not necessarily represent the views of the editors.

NATIONAL REVIEW

October 10 issue; printed September 22

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MAIN NUMBER 212-679-7330
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WASHINGTON OFFICE 202-543-9226

ADVERTISING SALES 212-679-7330
Executive Publisher Scott F. Budd
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letters to the editor

KNOW WHEN TO HOLD 'EM

Kate O'Beirne's "Strangle Holds" (August 29) quotes an unnamed "frustrated administration official" as saying, "For the Senate to conduct business as usual with the nation at war . . . is so outrageous. They do not see the nation at war; that's a real difference between this president and Congress."

The reasons I placed a hold on Alice Fisher's nomination to be head of the Department of Justice's criminal division have everything to do with making sure that the executive branch does not go on conducting business as usual. Like it or not, the sad truth is that when letters from senators get ignored or dismissed, a hold is sometimes the only effective way to get the executive branch to focus on important issues. In this case the important issue impacted directly on terrorism-related activity on U.S. soil. Mrs. O'Beirne did not bother to explain the reasons for my hold, nor did she call or write to me for an explanation.

The Department of Justice was systematically blocking Congress's ability to gather information on a number of FBI oversight issues, including a case where the Bureau delayed for four months a wiretap request on an individual who was communicating with a designated terrorist. I had credible information that the reason for this delay stemmed from a turf battle with another federal agency—in other words, business as usual. The FBI's inaction prevented the interception of over 700 communications, and Director Robert Mueller recently admitted that the Bureau was at fault for the delay. Thankfully, the inspector general's office is now investigating the matter aggressively. (For the record, I lifted my hold two days before the August recess, once I was assured that the executive branch was finally dealing with this fiasco.)

Failing to gather facts before writing an opinion piece is a disservice to readers. The bottom-line question here is: What's more important to winning the War on Terror, that the FBI intercept communications with known terrorists or that one of Mrs. O'Beirne's friends

be confirmed a few weeks earlier?

Sen. Charles E. Grassley
Washington, D.C.

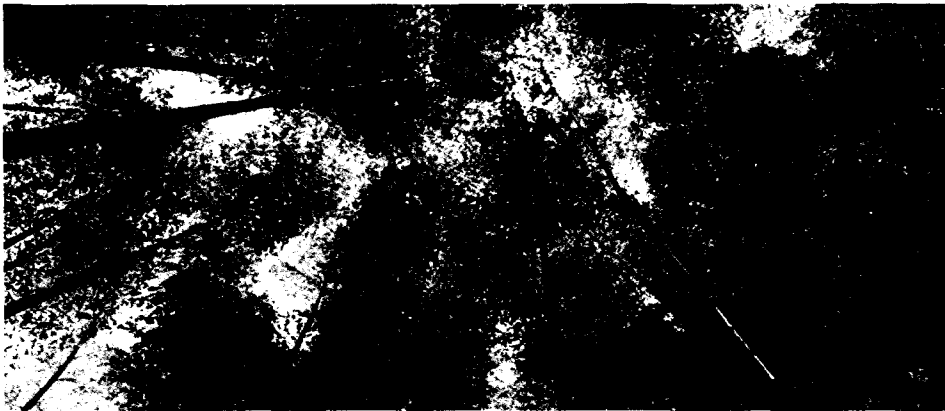
KATE O'BEIRNE REPLIES: Senator Grassley explains that he held up a DOJ nominee for a crucial job owing to an unrelated FBI matter, which is exactly what I reported. The last snippy line displays a paranoid conspiratorial frame of mind that must bedevil the subjects of his senatorial scrutiny. My article discussing the practice of holding critical nominees hostage for extraneous reasons highlighted five held nominees, including people I know and people I've never met. One hopes that the good senator has more credible "oversight" in his committee duties.

ANOTHER HORSE

I read *Doonesbury* every day, and I find Garry Trudeau's portrayal of our military in Iraq to be disrespectful at every turn; in fact, I believe he dishonors everything our young people are doing in the War on Terror. Michael Potemra, in his review of the new *Doonesbury* book ("*Doonesbury's* Heroes," August 29), sees in Trudeau just the opposite. He describes him as a "sympathetic observer . . . whose sentiment strikes home." It strikes home all right, but not because he is sympathetic or sentimental; his dislike for President Bush comes through loud and clear whenever he depicts people in uniform. It is absolutely amazing that Mr. Potemra and I can look at the same thing and come to diametrically opposite conclusions. That's what makes a horse-race, they say.

John H. Boyet
Tampa, Fla.

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The value of seeing the whole forest.

by the parent company of Kraft Foods, Philip Morris International
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THE WEEK

■ Cindy Sheehan, priestess of the anti-war movement, has demanded that Bush leave “occupied New Orleans.” We could only think of the good old days—the Reagan ’80s—when buttons said, “U.S. Out of North America.”

■ Surely the most unfortunate thing President Bush has said since the disaster of Hurricane Katrina is the now-famous compliment directed to then-Federal Emergency Management Agency chief Michael Brown: “Brownie, you’re doing a heck of a job.” The president made the remark during a visit to Alabama on September 2, and even then, it was clear that Brown was not doing a heck of a job. Later, of course, that became overwhelmingly obvious, yet the White House, inexplicably, did not move quickly to sack Brown. First, it bobbled the matter, in effect demoting Brown by taking him off the Gulf assignment. Only later did it accept his resignation. By then, however, a lot of damage had been done. Most important, failing to act quickly to relieve Brown contributed to the confusion at FEMA during a critical time. But it also allowed Bush’s critics to attack his disinclination to hold people accountable for their mistakes. The joke going around just after the hurricane was that no one knew whether the president would fire Brown or award him the Medal of Freedom. That would not have been funny had there not been a grain of truth to it.

■ Shortly after Congress approved \$62 billion in hurricane-relief spending, House majority leader Tom DeLay told reporters that Congress would have to borrow to pay for it. Apparently, there just isn’t room for spending cuts in our fat-free federal budget. “My answer to those that want to offset the spending is, Sure, bring me the offsets—I’ll be glad to do it.” The citizens of Bozeman, Mont., stepped up first, petitioning their city council to give back \$4 million that the recently passed highway bill appropriates for a parking garage in their city. Alaskans came next: The *Anchorage Daily News* has run numerous letters requesting that \$454 million earmarked to build giant bridges to all-but-uninhabited islands be spent on hurricane relief instead. Alaska congressman Don Young, who midwived those wastes, called that idea “the dumbest thing I’ve ever heard.” Would that Washington had more dummies, and fewer Don Youngs.

■ Post-Katrina, TV news gave itself a big pat on the back, rightfully so: The anchors showed stamina and guts, the images were vivid. But what television gave in immediacy, it took in lurid exaggeration. At the cold distance of a fortnight,



the *New York Times* wrote: “[M]any of the urban legends that sprang up—the systematic rape of children, the slitting of a 7-year-old’s throat—so far seem to be just that. The fact that some of these rumors were repeated by overwhelmed local officials does not completely get the news media off the hook.” The *Times*, perhaps naturally, focused on John Gibson of Fox and Tucker Carlson, MSNBC’s house conservative. But the general point is well taken. We should be governed by government. It, not television, is made up of the people we elect and pay. The media are a necessary watchdog. But we must always watch them, especially in fast-moving crises, with a grain of salt.

■ “If one person criticizes” Louisiana officials for their response to Katrina, Sen. Mary Landrieu said on ABC’s *This Week*, “including the president of the United States, he will hear from me. One more word about it after this show airs, and I might likely have to punch him. Literally.” And what if the critic were a woman? Connie London, formerly of New Orleans, had the following colloquy with ABC’s Dean Reynolds in the Houston Astrodome after Bush’s hurricane speech. London: “I feel like our city and our state government should have been there before the federal government was called in. They should have been on their jobs.” Reynolds: “And they weren’t?” London: “No, no, no, no. Lord, they wasn’t. I mean, they had RTA buses, Greyhound buses, school buses, that was just sitting there going under water when they could have been evacuating people.” Will the senator punch the evacuee?

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IN THE NEWS

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04/14/2005

America's pharmaceutical research companies continue to send comprehensive disaster aid packages to public and private relief organizations to help lessen the suffering of survivors and to start rebuilding lives. Health crisis in the Gulf Coast region following Hurricane Katrina.

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THE WEEK...

■ Before Katrina swamped President Bush's legislative agenda, he was about to get a shot in the Senate at one of his longstanding goals—the permanent repeal of the estate tax, currently shrinking, shrinking, shrinking, but set to return to 55 percent in 2011. “Not now, for heaven's sake!” cried Senate minority leader Harry Reid. And the indefatigable Howard Dean: “Shall we give that [money] to the wealthiest people in the country, or should we rebuild New Orleans?” The demagogues of the Left are beating this silly line into the ground, in the process of linking New Orleans to anything and everything they hate about the Bush agenda: Iraq, John Roberts, etc. The tragedy in New Orleans in no way changes the reality of our estate tax, which is still the second highest in the industrial world, and morally problematic. Now may not be the best time to have this debate—but Congress can't micromanage the recovery effort forever, and should return to a needed agenda ASAP. The permanent repeal of the estate tax would be an excellent place to start.

■ Give Bill Clinton credit. He's always had a remarkable talent for being . . . well, flexible. You may remember back in 1998 when, after ordering military strikes against Iraq, Clinton said, “The hard fact is that so long as Saddam remains in power, he threatens the well-being of his people, the peace of his region, the security of the world . . . The credible threat to use force, and when necessary the actual use of force, is the surest way to contain Saddam's weapons-of-mass-destruction program . . .” That was then. Now Clinton is blasting the Bush administration, telling ABC News that the president “decided to launch this invasion virtually alone and before the U.N. inspections were completed, with no real urgency, no evidence that there was any weapons of mass destruction there.” Spot the difference? These days, every Clinton statement can be interpreted in light of two things: his ongoing legacy-rehabilitation project and his wife's campaign for the presidency. At the moment, he obviously deems it most advantageous to hit Bush on the war (even though Mrs. Clinton voted to authorize the president's actions). But things could change yet again. Should conditions in Iraq improve and the war show signs of greater success, you know what Clinton will say then: He was for it all along.

■ With his poll numbers sagging, California governor Arnold Schwarzenegger said on September 16 that he will seek reelection next year. His announcement was timed to boost a package of budget, school, and election-reform proposals that so far haven't generated much enthusiasm but will appear on a statewide ballot in November. Although these measures are not nearly as aggressive as they might have been, they have antagonized California's powerful public-employee unions, which already have spent millions to defeat them, and now they will be viewed as a referendum on Schwarzenegger's tenure. The same may also be said of Proposition 75, a “pay-check protection” initiative that would require unions to receive permission from workers before spending their dues

on politics. Schwarzenegger isn't the driving force behind it—as he is behind the other proposals—but he did endorse it. Separately, the governor got an unexpected boost from Sacramento lawmakers when they approved a bill recognizing gay marriage, despite the wishes of an electorate that overwhelmingly voted to ban gay marriage five years ago. California's Democrat-dominated state legislature is now the first in the nation to embrace marriage as something other than a union between a man and a woman. (Massachusetts enacted gay marriage through judicial decree; its legislators merely have declined to object). Schwarzenegger has promised a veto, and because of this it's possible for him to say that the only thing preventing gay marriage from becoming a reality in California is a Republican governor. As he prepares for his political comeback, that's not a bad message.

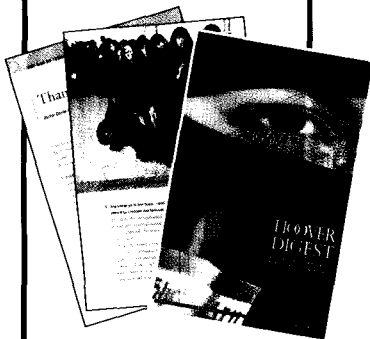
■ Fernando Ferrer eked out a victory in the New York City Democratic mayoral primary, just winning the 40 percent necessary to avoid a run-off. Ferrer, an old hack who runs left in the vain effort to generate interest, will face nominal Republican incumbent Michael Bloomberg in November. No news there. The news was in the details of the endgame. Post-election morning, when it seemed as if Ferrer might fall short, second-place finisher Rep. Anthony Weiner preemptively conceded in the interests of party unity. This is racial code. Weiner, who is white, would be perceived as “divisive” if he forced Ferrer, a Hispanic, into an expensive second-round struggle. In the New York Democratic party, all leaners go to minorities. Weiner's stand-down also reflects the casualness with which we treat elections. Suppose Ferrer had in fact missed 40 percent, however narrowly? Elections can be squeakers. But there should be some winner, and agreed-upon rules for picking him. Otherwise we push the process in the direction of whim, polls, general will, and pressure-group grandstanding.

■ The winning design for the memorial to United Flight 93 in Shanksville, Pa., was called “Crescent of Embrace”; it included, beside a chapel with wind chimes, a crescent-shaped cluster of maple trees and a white memorial wall. Conservatives questioned the propriety of inadvertently incorporating an Islamic symbol into the commemoration of our first victory over Islamism. Maybe they protested too much: The Allies in World War II used the V-for-victory motif from Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, even though Beethoven was a German. The crescent will be expunged from the name, and from the site. Who will improve the design? The passengers of Flight 93 battled to overcome their captors, if possible; to spare their fellow Americans another deadly blow at least. Robert Lowell wrote that when Augustus St. Gaudens's memorial to Col. Robert Shaw and the heroic 54th Massachusetts Regiment was unveiled in Boston, William James could hear “the bronze Negroes breathe.” What we will hear at Shanksville is wind chimes. We breed heroes still, not artists fit for them.

■ For years, radical mosques have been fueling the global jihad. For just as long, it has been evident that jihadist savagery has been plotted—and sometimes carried out—by young Muslim men, often posing as mere students, who hail

The False Promise of Autocratic Stability

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In my travels to roughly fifty countries, I have been thrown out of only one—Uzbekistan—just a few months after its emergence as an independent state under its first and only president, Islam Karimov. My crime: meeting with human rights activists.

At that time, Karimov's campaign to limit contact with Westerners was not considered a strategic concern for U.S. officials. Immediately following the USSR's collapse, the central aim of American foreign policy in Central Asia was to strengthen Uzbekistan's independence, thus ensuring that the Soviet Union was not reconstituted. Karimov has ruled Uzbekistan as a dictator, yet his repressive ways never impeded his developing close ties with the United States. In the 1990s, Uzbekistan emerged as an active participant in NATO's Partnership for Peace program and appeared eager to check Russian influence in the region.

The early strategy of engaging with Karimov's regime reaped huge short-term benefits for the United States in the immediate aftermath of September 11. Without hesitation, Karimov allowed U.S. and other NATO forces to use Uzbek air bases during the invasion of Afghanistan. The Uzbek base in Karshi-Khanabad proved a great asset in deploying U.S. forces in the region.

Moreover, Karimov's regime looked as though it would be an asset in fighting the war on terror because he claimed that it was successfully fighting the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, a fundamentalist terrorist organization. Karimov's method of rule seemed both pro-American and stable, atypical of that region.

Autocrats, however, never make for good allies in the long run. First and foremost, the internal stability that dictators provide is never permanent. In the face of societal unrest, oppressive autocrats eventually fuel societal resistance by resorting to even more repression to stay in power, sidelining moderates and strengthening extremists, such as Islamic fundamentalists. These situations rarely serve U.S. interests. Second, they answer to no one and can reverse external commitments at a moment's notice. Friendly dictators quickly become hostile.

Karimov today is demonstrating the limits of relying on autocrats as allies. On May 13, he ordered troops to fire on unarmed demonstrators in Andijon, killing hundreds. The circumstances that sparked this massacre remain murky, but his response has been crystal clear: more repression. Even more surprising has been his decision to blame the West for the Andijon tragedy and turn against the United States. Our once stable and solid ally in Central Asia has now embraced Russian president Vladimir Putin and called for the eviction of U.S. forces. Our close association with Karimov is also an embarrassment to President Bush's liberty doctrine.

Even more threatening is the combustible political situation in Uzbekistan. Thirteen years of dictatorship have not reduced the terrorist threat to Uzbekistan or the region; any regime that must slaughter its citizens to remain in power is not stable. In banking on Karimov as our ally, we are squandering the opportunity to foster the kinds of democratic institutions that make for more enduring U.S. allies.

—Michael McFaul

Michael McFaul is the Peter and Helen Bing Senior Fellow at the Hoover Institution.

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THE WEEK...

from overseas terror sanctuaries. In a speech at the Heritage Foundation, Massachusetts governor Mitt Romney noted those two well-established facts and drew the logical conclusion: The government should be closely watching radical mosques and student immigrants from terror states. His point was unassailable, so naturally it was assailed immediately by the conglomeration of the professionally aggrieved—the ACLU, various Islamic activist groups—who demanded an apology. Governor Romney properly refused, and here’s hoping he sticks to his guns. The record of radical mosque participation in terror is too rich to admit of serious dispute. Romney, moreover, was calling for a monitoring consistent with federal law, for which a judicial finding of probable cause—that the target is either committing crimes or an agent of a foreign power—is prerequisite. Such investigations are not simply appropriate; they are what government must be doing if we are to prevent another 9/11.

■ Any of our readers who find themselves in the vicinity of Las Vegas and in need of paid employment might drop in on a temp agency called Labor Express. They have some openings in unskilled outdoor work at six dollars an hour. The work is quite grueling: You have to walk up and down toting heavy signs in noonday temperatures of over a hundred degrees. Still, if you need the money, you might give it a try. But who is the unscrupulous employer taking advantage of minimum-wage labor like this? Why, it’s the United Food and Commercial Workers labor union. They need people to man picket lines at a neighborhood Wal-Mart store. For six dollars an hour. Holding up signs. In the noonday heat. This particular Wal-Mart store has a pay scale starting at \$6.75 an hour, and the place is air-conditioned. So if do you take that picketing job, you might want to break from work for a few minutes to dodge inside the store and fill out a job application . . .

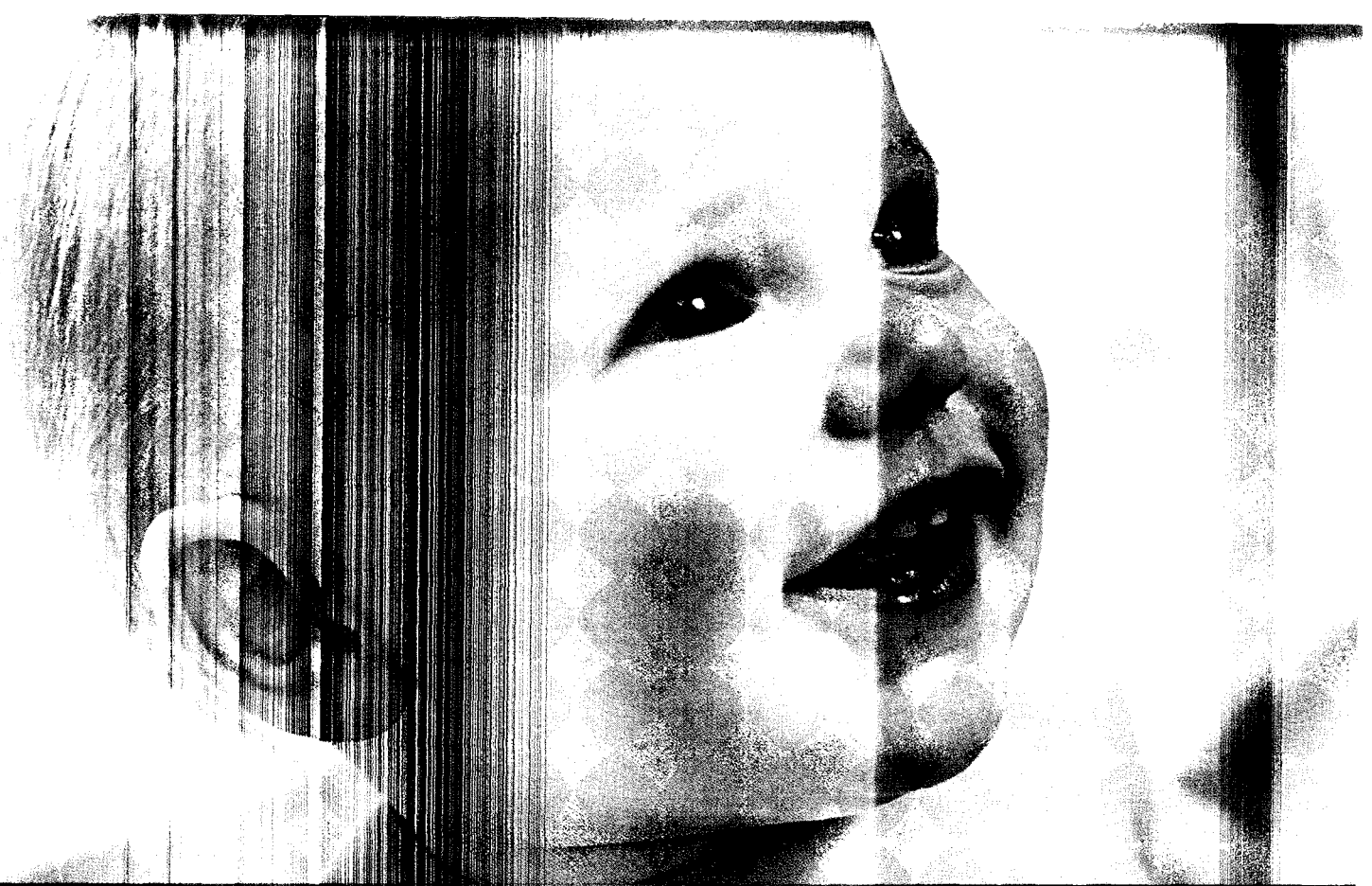
■ If atheists believed in God, they might thank Him for creating Michael Newdow to protect their tender sensibilities. It was Newdow who persuaded the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals to rule that requiring students to recite the words “under God” in the Pledge of Allegiance violates the First Amendment. That ruling was overturned by the Supreme Court on the grounds that Newdow, who is not sole custodian of his school-aged daughter, lacks standing to sue on her behalf. So Newdow found likeminded parents to sue along with him, and a federal judge has ruled in their favor. Now, it is difficult to see what injury the Pledge does to an atheist. He holds that the idea of God is absurd, not offensive—from his perspective, the Pledge may as well invoke the Easter Bunny. Moreover, it requires a leap of faith (oops) to see how those two words—“under God”—amount to an establishment of religion. What those who are so inclined should pray for is a Supreme Court ruling that addresses the merits of Newdow’s argument and clarifies our tangled web of church-state jurisprudence. That would be—a miracle.

■ The German elections have resulted in a tie, which in this case is a euphemism for crisis. The conservatives under Angela Merkel at one point had a lead of at least 20 points, and should have won hands down. They tried to explain that Germany—and beyond it the EU—has to reform the combination of handouts and regulation causing economic and social sclerosis, as shown by the figure of 5 million unemployed. As they campaigned, however, they seemed frightened by what they were saying, and the incumbent Gerhard Schroeder and the socialists capitalized on it. The dilemma is that neither of the two main parties has the majority required to form a government. In the next several weeks, both have to decide whether to form a grand coalition, or to obtain the necessary majority by offering inducements to the smaller parties to join them. All these courses are recipes for continuing sclerosis. In the wings, neo-Communists and neo-Nazis and their Green cousins account for at least a quarter of the electorate. An anxiety is felt from Germany.

■ MUSLIM ELECTIONS, PART I. The Afghans have pulled it off: They have held elections to select the members of a bicameral legislature. The feat is amazing. History, tradition, and culture in this wild and remote country have no trace of anything like representative democracy. The Afghans had to stand up to the usual blood-curdling threats of the Taliban to kill everybody. And the actual process was so complicated, it would have baffled voters in the West. Some 5,700 candidates were running for the two legislative houses, not as party members but as individuals. Almost 600 of them were women—unheard of, in this society. The ballot forms were the size of small newspapers. According to monitors, seven people, including two policemen, were shot dead; 16 of some 6,000 polling sites failed to open; turnout was a bit over 50 percent. Not perfect, then, but quite enough for a post-mortem to discourage Osama bin Laden and anyone else in his cave.

■ MUSLIM ELECTIONS, PART II. A presidential election in Egypt is a foregone conclusion, and indeed Hosni Mubarak has just been elected to his fifth consecutive six-year term as president. All this time he has ruled by emergency decree, though the real emergency is his despotism. Bush policy is pushing the pace of events in the Middle East, and Mubarak had to consent to the unprecedented step of allowing other candidates to run against him, nine of them in all. He made sure to vet them. The only permitted Islamist, for example, was 90 years old and had a platform of restoring the fez as national headdress. The United States had to pressure Mubarak to allow Ayman Nour out of prison in time to run as a serious democratic reformer. Blatant fraud and stuffing of ballot boxes further ensured Mubarak’s victory, but only 23 percent of the electorate turned out, showing what Egyptians really think of these proceedings. The day of Ayman Nour and his like is coming.

■ Prime Minister Koizumi won a historic reelection victory in Japan. He staked everything on his controversial proposal for reform of Japan’s postal service, which, among other things, serves as a slush fund for old-school members of his Liberal Democratic party. Voters responded, and Koizumi



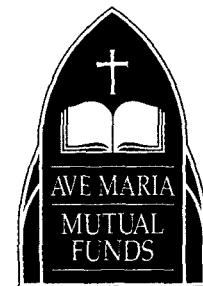
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now has an opportunity to enact far-reaching market reforms. Japan has been saddled with a seemingly moribund political system and economy for a decade or more. This election is a step toward the renewed vitality of this key U.S. ally. Hats off to Koizumi the Bold.

■ A promise from Kim Jong-Il to give up his nuclear program should be taken about as seriously as an invitation from a cannibal to enjoy a vegetarian dinner. Forgive us, then, for being skeptical of the recently announced agreement that commits North Korea to giving up "all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programs" in exchange for economic aid and security guarantees. This is more or less the same deal Clinton got in 1994—and we all know how splendidly that worked out. The details of the agreement—a timeline for its implementation, the precise incentives to be given Pyongyang, and an inspection regime—are to be arranged later. President Bush is, of course, vastly more clear-headed than his predecessor, and his administration is wisely insisting that it will not even consider providing North Korea with a light-water reactor until its nuclear program has been fully and verifiably dismantled. We trust the president will stick to that position. Otherwise, he will be confronting the worst possible outcome: Kim Jong-Il will have gained legitimacy by pretending to be cooperative, even as he remains free to build nukes on the sly.

■ Hurrah for Tony Blair, who took a slash at the over-inflated tires of the regulation-happy environmentalist crowd. At a Manhattan meeting with Bill Clinton and other big shots, Blair resolved to deliver some "brutal honesty" about the Kyoto Protocol and future efforts like it. He said, in short: There is no realistic future for treaties that attempt to curb global warming by placing stringent restrictions on carbon-dioxide emissions. The costs of such restrictions are astronomically high, and most countries will simply refuse to bear them—especially such countries as China and India, which have massive emerging economies to facilitate. If we want to get real about reducing emissions, we have to get smart about developing new, energy-efficient technologies that will be friendly not only to the global ecosystem but also to the global economy. Blair's

A REAL DOWNER

*As Big Easy parishes drain,
The Dems are exhibiting strain—
Tics, mostly, affecting the eyes,
Though some get dyspeptic; the wise,
Aware of the body bags sent,
Suggest the Left's looking so spent
Because of bods falling below
The advertised total, a blow.*



—W. H. VON DREELE

insight is nothing new to free-market conservatives: We know that in the long-distance race to improve the human condition, there is no fair contest between regulation and innovation. But it sure is heartening to hear this coming from a leader of Europe.

■ The question of Blair and Islamism is different. He has defined Islamism as an "evil ideology," but the Muslim spokesmen around him—plus the "civil liberties" crowd—make sure there is little or nothing he or anyone else can do to protect the public. Committees of Muslims have been set up to advise on Islamism. One such committee calls for the scrapping of Holocaust Memorial Day, on the grounds that its Jewish connotations "are offensive to Muslims." Sir Iqbal Sacranie, secretary general of the official Muslim Council of Britain, and given his knighthood by Blair some months ago, quite agrees. Others on the committees include Inayat Bunglawala, who refers to Osama bin Laden as a "freedom fighter," and Tariq Ramadan, who preaches that Muslims should live in the West on their own terms and need never assimilate. One Downing Street adviser is Ahmad Thomson, born in Zimbabwe but a convert to Islam, and a lawyer. He believes that the Holocaust is a lie, and that a conspiracy of Jews and Freemasons control Blair and are responsible for the war in Iraq. "Londonistan" is not the amusing sobriquet it seemed once to be.

■ The club of those who have lain down with dogs and risen up with fleas has a new member: Yahoo, Inc. Shi Tao, a Chinese journalist, sent an American website instructions he had received from the state propaganda bureau about what he could and couldn't report on the 15th anniversary of the Tiananmen Square massacre. When the Chinese authorities requested information about his e-mail account, Yahoo provided it—and he has now been sentenced to ten years in prison for "revealing state secrets." Jerry Yang, Yahoo's founder, says that his company must comply with local laws—a spurious claim, since the Yahoo subsidiary in question is based in Hong Kong and has no obligation to obey the mainland's security codes. But if the subsidiary had been in Beijing, should we be persuaded by Yang's Nuremberg defense? Like many other Western companies, Yahoo has bought access to the Chinese market by acquiescing in the suppression of freedom. Whether these companies have a liberalizing effect—despite betraying a journalist here, a dissident there—is debatable. But whatever the answer, it cannot give Shi his lost decade back.

■ Literally minutes after the Israelis pulled out of the Gaza Strip, a mob of Palestinians rushed in to loot anything left. They stripped bare the greenhouses in which the Israeli settlers had grown flowers and vegetables. These state-of-the-art buildings had been paid for by Americans, and would have provided thousands of jobs, and furthermore were supposed to be protected by agreement with the Palestinian authorities. The same authorities had also agreed to respect the settlers' abandoned synagogues, but the mob put them to the torch immediately, while the Palestinian police stood by. There was a time when the civilized world protested this sort of thing.

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■ Despite Kofi Annan's noble efforts, Utopia has been postponed. The secretary-general convened his recent U.N. summit on poverty and reform with high hopes: Nuclear powers would agree to dismantle their arsenals; weapons would be banned from space; wealthy countries would give away 0.7 percent of their GDP to the Third World, halving poverty by 2015; and the Lord God, descending in His chariot of fire, would usher in the eschaton. It is the ogreish John Bolton who stands between us and Kofi's vision: The U.S. ambassador to Turtle Bay proposed 750 amendments to the U.N.'s draft reform document, striking, among other things, the aforementioned bits. Bolton did fail to leverage the Oil for Food scandal—a minor bookkeeping error, far below the secretary-general's august station—into any real structural reform. We may comfort ourselves, then, with the expectation that Kofi's voice will be heard crying in the wilderness another day.

■ President Gyude Bryant of Liberia set a record recently when, on a visit to the United Nations in New York, he endorsed 103 international treaties on behalf of his nation—more treaties than have ever been endorsed before at one sitting by the representative of any nation. The treaties cover trade, human rights, corruption, and nuclear proliferation. President Bryant, as our readers will no doubt recall, succeeded interim leader Moses Blah (a rather nondescript fellow, if anyone wants our opinion) back in 2003, as part of the settlement following the overthrow of the odious Mr. Charles Taylor. We wish President Bryant luck with his country's appalling problems, congratulate him on his sensational entry into the diplomatic record books, and hope that former president Blah finds retirement cheering and stimulating.

■ New York got a bitter taste of British oratory when MP George Galloway slithered into town to debate Christopher Hitchens over the war in Iraq. Galloway's rhetoric was galling even for him. The worst of it came when he indulged in the Left's lurid fantasy about 9/11: "Some believe that those aeroplanes on September 11 came out of a clear blue sky. I believe they came out of a swamp of hatred—created by us!" What could be uglier than seeing such twisted filth strutted about in the heart of Manhattan (and three days after the anniversary of the World Trade Center attacks, to boot)? Only this: hearing some gleeful cheers coming from the New York audience.

■ To prevent unseemly wrangles and "forum shopping" in child-custody cases, federal law—to be exact, the Parental Kidnapping Prevention Act of 1980—enjoins states to honor child-custody rulings already made by other states. Well and good: but the federal Defense of Marriage Act (1996) permits states to decline to recognize same-sex unions blessed by other states. It was only a matter of time before these two federal laws collided. Here is Lisa Miller of Virginia, who was briefly joined by the authorities of Vermont in a civil union with one

Janet Jenkins. The union was soon blessed with a child, Isabella, born to Ms. Miller. Little more than a year later, however, the couple broke up. Ms. Miller found religion, forswore her former inclination, and took little Isabella back to Virginia, a state which does not recognize civil unions. So: Does Ms. Jenkins have visitation rights with the child? Yes, ruled a Vermont court. No, ruled a Virginia court. King Solomon had a brisk solution to this sort of thing, but in the present state of our culture the issue will more likely be decided by the U.S. Supreme Court. Oh, what a tangled web we weave, when same-sex partners can conceive.

■ Chai Soua Vang was convicted of murdering six hunters who found him trespassing on their land in northern Wisconsin. Vang, who is a Hmong, a southeast Asian tribe that was allied with us during the Vietnam War, said that the hunters berated him with racial slurs. Two survivors of the party denied it. If they had unloaded a whole dictionary on him, it would not justify murder (he chased two of them, who were unarmed, for hundreds of yards and shot them in the back). Yet Vang testified that three of his victims deserved to die, and members of his family apparently agree: His sister said she was "glad" her brother had stood up for himself, and his uncle called him "a hero." The problem is larger than the evil Vangs. America defines racism as our national original sin. What then do sinners deserve? Endless criticism and self-criticism, we all agree; more than that, the Vangs agree. These perverse judgments are sadly beyond a court's rectification.

■ One of those periodic surveys of sexual behavior showed up in our newspapers the other day. We learned, for example, that slightly more than half of American youngsters aged 15 to 19 have engaged in oral sex; that the proportion rises to about 70 percent among 18- and 19-year-olds; and that among women in their late teens and twenties, one in seven report an intimate same-sex encounter. Hmm. But which university or research institute is bringing us these figures? Why, it is our federal government—to be precise, the National Center for Health Statistics. Is this kind of thing really within the purview of federally financed activities? At which point, exactly, among the activities of those orally gratifying teens or tribadic twentysomethings, does the Commerce Clause kick in?

■ Fertility clinics in Britain will soon face a dramatic decline in supplies of sperm. There is a trend all over Europe toward permitting children conceived via donated sperm to have access, when they come of age, to the name of the donor who sired them. Britain joins this trend next April, after which anonymous sperm donations will no longer be legal. Understandably, sperm donors mainly prefer anonymity. The prospect of a phone call opening with "Hi, Dad . . .," out of the blue, 18 years after the donation, is apparently off-putting to many. Thus, donations can be expected to dwindle. The laws of supply and demand are not mocked, though. One bold entrepreneur, Mr. Ole Schou of Denmark, is proposing to anchor "sperm ships" in international waters around the British Isles, supplying services to infertile couples who seek anonymous sperm, or other reproductive technologies. Since shipboard life is governed by the laws of the nation whose



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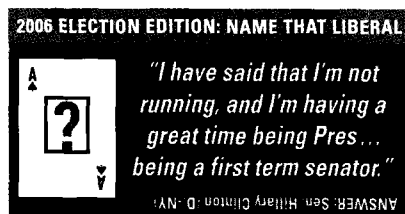
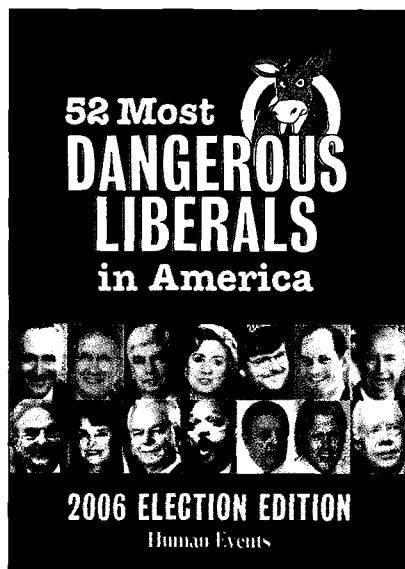
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THE WEEK...

flag the ship flies, and Danish law will continue to preserve donor anonymity, all is perfectly legal. Here on the philo-progenitive right, we are happy for all couples who are blessed with conception. We do worry, though, that perhaps the phrase "shipboard romance" will never have quite the same allure.

■ In the history of film, Greta Garbo has a unique cachet. Born exactly a hundred years ago, in Sweden, she was the very ideal of beauty, the Venus de Milo of the silent screen. The expressive eyes, the bone structure of forehead and cheeks, that quickening smile, and the low, sultry voice once she had speaking parts—everything was perfect. As Ninotchka, Anna Karenina, Queen Christina, she took the world by surprise as some ultimate heroine. And then slipping from conquest to surrender, she dramatized herself as Greta Garbo with her famous "I want to be alone." The part she most wished to play was that of a solitary, wandering unrecognized in great cities. To modern celebrity-struck audiences, it was incomprehensible—but in its way also the completion of a great legend.

■ Simon Wiesenthal experienced the full hell of the 20th century. Some of his relatives were murdered by the Germans, others by the Russians. In concentration camps himself, he was twice spared summary execution, and then survived forced labor in the Mauthausen quarry. His physical and moral strengths were equal. He and his Documentation Center in Vienna identified Nazis and brought thousands of them to trial, including Eichmann and Franz Stangl, commandant of Treblinka extermination camp. For years, he tried to unravel the fate of Raoul Wallenberg, the heroic Swedish diplomat, put to death somewhere in a Soviet Gulag. He liked to repeat that it was not for us either to forgive or to forget. It wasn't revenge he wanted, but justice. He was a great man. R.I.P.

THE LAW

Hail to the Chief

JOHN ROBERTS won praise from most quarters for his conduct during his 20 hours of questioning from senators. Some of this praise strikes us as a trifle overdone. How intellectually nimble does a member of the Supreme Court bar have to be to deal with Joe Biden? (Should the reviews tempt Roberts to arrogance, he should reflect that nobody is smarter than Biden believes himself to be.)

Roberts's answers suggested that his jurisprudence would be within the proper constitutional bounds. "Judges and justices are servants of the law, not the other way around," Roberts explained. "Judges are like umpires. Umpires don't make the rules. They apply them. . . . No one ever went to a

ballgame to see the umpire." The subtext of his answers about international law was that they don't pick rules from other games in other countries, either. These are the constitutional basics, and they leave considerable room for disagreement about what good judging, like good umpiring, means in practice. Yet the basics seemed genuinely to puzzle a good many Senate Democrats. A good judge, in their view, was one who would protect "abortion rights." One who, in addition, would give Congress broad power, except when taking a broad view of individual rights. (When these two imperatives are in conflict, presumably a good judge consults the Democratic platform.)

In his discussion of the role precedent should play at the Supreme Court, and especially of the Court's precedents having to do with "privacy" and abortion, Roberts was careful. His answers did not commit him to overruling *Roe v. Wade* and *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*—but that fact does not mean that he committed himself to upholding those rulings, either, even if a fair amount of liberal wishful thinking to that effect has been aired.

Roberts said that the Constitution protects privacy rights, which it does, and suggested that the Court was not going to revisit the question of whether married couples have a right to use contraception, which it won't. His answers here did not much differ from those given by Clarence Thomas during his hearings. Roberts said that *Roe* was a precedent, entitled to the same amount of deference as any precedent would be—an amount he declined to spell out. His answer was, however, in contrast to Judiciary Committee chairman Arlen Specter's pet theory that *Roe* is entitled to more deference than other Supreme Court decisions because it's so "super-duper" (a qualifier the Framers unaccountably forgot to include in the constitutional text). He acknowledged that overruling a precedent could provide a needed, or justified, "jolt to the system," as *Brown v. Board* had.

Roberts left the door wide open to modifying and even overturning *Roe*—along with other liberal precedents—when the time is right. That time may never come unless the president makes a similar appointment in filling the pending vacancy of Justice Sandra Day O'Connor. The Democrats may be poised to do conservatives a favor by demonstrating that no Republican nominee, no matter how qualified or inoffensive, can avoid significant opposition from them.

President Bush should therefore nominate the most qualified conservative jurist available to replace O'Connor—just as soon as John Roberts is confirmed.

HURRICANE KATRINA

Recovery

PRESIDENT BUSH's speech from Jackson Square in New Orleans sketched his program for recovery from Hurricane Katrina. "We will do what it takes, we will stay as long as it takes, to help citizens rebuild their communities and their lives. . . . There is no way to imagine America without New Orleans, and this great city will rise again." Bold words; how will they be made real?

The flower of a great city is its culture, style, and soul. But these have to be nourished by economic roots. The roots of New Orleans were rotting long before Katrina hit. New Orleans's destiny is to be one of the continent's premier ports, handling grain and oil. Its trade- and production-based job sector lagged behind Houston's, however—and its unemployed underclass swelled. The city fathers of New Orleans, when they weren't stealing, were placing their hopes in tourism, a low-wage sector. If New Orleans is to be something other than an R-rated Williamsburg of food and music, it has to look to basics.

Looking to basics will help the poor. The storm fell most heavily on them; if the recovery is not to fall heavily on them, they must have jobs. Bush's proposal to create Worker Recovery Accounts—\$5,000 federal nest eggs that would pay for job training or education—is a good idea. But then the poor must have something to do with their skills. Otherwise low-income rebuilding will just create what urbanologist Joel Kotkin calls “Gazas on the Gulf”—new warehousing for old hopelessness. Better the poor relocate than be shunted back into such dead-ends.

Bush's expansive speech was an effort to recover from one problem. As we move beyond the shocking footage and the shouts of Anderson Cooper, we see that a lot went right with the federal relief efforts in the Gulf. Journalist Lou Dolinar has detailed thousands of rescues by the Coast

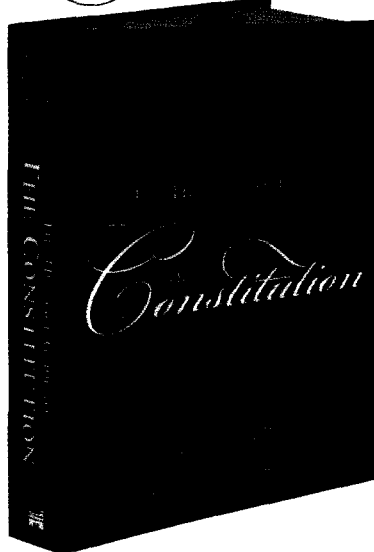
Guard and others. But Bush's tied tongue and FEMA's initial errors (compounding the grosser failures of the locals) left Bush in a leadership hole, from which he must now extricate himself.

Bush's rebuilding effort will also be hampered by another, ongoing problem—the profligacy of his administration, and the GOP-led Congress. In the Clinton years, there were offsets for special expenditures, such as Los Angeles earthquake relief (some of them demanded by the Republican Congress, then in opposition). Bush could find a lot of potential offsets in transportation pork, the Medicare drug benefit, No Child Left Behind—but how will recipients be weaned from favors that have been pressed upon them so zealously? “National greatness” man David Brooks hailed Katrina relief as a show-piece of “Bushian conservatism.” We've seen that already—it's called shooting the moon, and hoping for the best. But when we have acts of God and acts of jihad to deal with, suddenly we are strapped.

A great nation, even—perhaps especially—one organized on free principles, must respond largely and generously to disasters. But in spending so freely on daily business, Bush has marginally diminished our greatness.

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notes & asides

■ Dear Bill: I know the *New York Times* is widely read, but it's provincial of you to proceed as though it were read by everybody. Priscilla Buckley is an important historical figure in *NATIONAL REVIEW* and I think you should show the opinion of the *New York Times*'s reviewer, Danielle Crittenden, to your readers.

Love,
Aggie [Dowd]
North Hampton, N.H.

Dear Aggie: Delighted to do so.

xx Bill

The New York Times Book Review, September 11, 2005, "Miss Buckley's School: *Living It Up with National Review*," by Danielle Crittenden

Exactly a half-century ago, William F. Buckley Jr. started *NATIONAL REVIEW*. The magazine would shape conservative politics for more than a generation. But it was not ideology alone that established the Buckleys as the first family of American conservatism. It was a style, a sensibility and a charm.

Bill Buckley's written and televised manifestation of these qualities earned him international celebrity. Yet for the small band of writers and intellectuals for whom *NATIONAL REVIEW* became a second home, the style and sensibility that often mattered most were those of Bill's dedicated elder sister, Priscilla.

For 43 years Priscilla Buckley worked alongside her famous brother. Her entertaining memoir *Living It Up with National Review* is a merry trapeze through those earlier days of gin-soaked deadlines, hot lead type and intense debates between libertarians and traditionalists.

Priscilla was a correspondent in the Paris bureau of what was then the United Press when Bill recruited her for NR. At the beginning, Priscilla appears to have been among the only staff members with any journalistic experience—and much of the reportorial and nitty-gritty editorial work fell to her. It would continue to do so over the next four decades. Priscilla accepted this burden with surprisingly

good humor, given that the magazine neglected to put her on the payroll for the first few months. Bill also persuaded other sisters to join the staff. "Bill has this wonderful feeling that his sisters can do absolutely anything, and do it competently, and at one time or another five of the six have worked for NR," Priscilla writes.

The NR offices became a base for generations of conservative writers and intellectuals: Whittaker Chambers, John Chamberlain, Russell Kirk, William Rusher, M. Stanton Evans, and James Burnham in the early years; then Paul Gigot, Richard Brookhiser, and Mona Charen in the 1980s; and after them, Richard Lowry, Kate O'Beirne, Jonah Goldberg, Ramesh Ponnuru, and David Brooks. Even some who dissented from the magazine's politics, when they worked there or later on, appeared in its pages: Garry Wills, Joan Didion, Arlene Croce, and John Leonard.

They may have been drawn to the project by Bill Buckley, but they filed their copy and haggled over their proofs with the diminutive but forceful Priscilla. It was she, too, who patiently nurtured their ambitions—and as often as not, counseled them in their personal lives. At one point, Priscilla jokes that she ran "Miss Buckley's Finishing School for Young Ladies and Gentlemen of Conservative Persuasion."

True enough, the ingénues and aspirants who filed through the NR offices were not simply there to sharpen their arguments but to be tutored in the Buckley style. Some mimicked Buckley himself, down to the urbane vocabulary and aristocratic drawl. Dashing, handsome, rich, William F. Buckley was the conservative answer to John F. Kennedy, and his clan the conservative answer to the Kennedys: Ten Catholic children who inherited buckets of oil money.

Competition among the siblings echoed the fierce Hyannisport ethos: "Growing up in a large family we were constantly challenging each other to do this or that: Dare you dive from the roof of the bathhouse into the pool. . . . By our code, as children, all challenges had to be accepted."

The family patriarch, William F. Buck-

ley Sr., shuttled his family from Camden, S.C., in winter to Sharon, Conn., in summer. In between, he kept an apartment on New York's Sutton Place. There were butlers, cooks and a man to roll the gravel drives. After Paris and before NR, Priscilla took a month off and spent it "doing what I loved best, quail hunting in the mornings, golfing in the afternoons, and partying with good and old friends at night."

As adults, the Buckleys kept up their glamorous lives—wintering in Gstaad, embarking upon spontaneous cruises to Bora Bora. Priscilla recounts—with that trademark Buckley insouciance—many of these exotic trips going wrong. And Bill and Priscilla often let their employees in on the fun. They once dragged NR members along on an Intourist holiday to Communist Russia. A new writer might receive a heady summons to Bill and Patricia Buckley's Upper East Side apartment for drinks or out to Stamford for a sail.

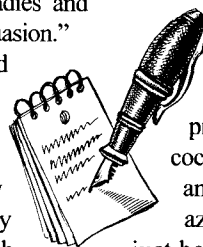
Well before Ronald Reagan became a national figure, Buckley was drumming home the lesson that how you said something was at least as important as what you said. Graduates of the Buckley finishing school took their training into the world—extending the influence of the magazine well beyond its circulation.

Priscilla, now in her 80s, remained devoted to *NATIONAL REVIEW* her whole life. She didn't marry or have children. Instead, she became an Auntie Mame figure to nieces, nephews and NR

colleagues alike—popping off to hunt big game in Africa or raft the Colorado River, playing pranks on office stiffies, repairing for cocktails after a tough day, cheerfully and competently remaking the magazine when breaking news occurred just before press time. When Robert Kennedy was shot, NR was about to run an enormous cover story attacking him; Priscilla saw that it was pulled.

Over the years, Priscilla has also proved a paragon of discretion. No middle-aged conservative need lose sleep over the fear that a youthful misadventure will be revealed by her. Priscilla's anecdotes are funny but never embarrassing, and if she ever had a disparaging thought about any of her young charges, she doesn't disclose it here. As the former headmistress of the Miss Buckley School, she is far too well bred to descend to that.

—WFB



DiFi and friend



■ THE SUPREME COURT ■

Outwitted and Outclassed

The Democrats stumble on Roberts

BYRON YORK

AT about 6:00 P.M. on Wednesday, September 14, in approximately the 19th hour of Supreme Court chief-justice nominee John Roberts's testimony before the Senate Judiciary Committee, after each senator had had the opportunity to question Roberts at great length, California Democrat Dianne Feinstein looked at Roberts and said, earnestly, "I want to go back to the 'hapless toad.' It still bothers me."

If a single question could be said to have drained whatever energy and interest remained among a dwindling number of senators, reporters, and spectators in the

Hart Building hearing room—well, that was it. Feinstein was referring to a phrase Roberts had used in an oft-quoted 2003 decision concerning the arroyo toad, a California species that was not, in Roberts's view, covered by the Endangered Species Act. But by that time, there was only one truly hapless party in the Roberts hearings, and that was Feinstein and her fellow Democrats.

What had before the hearing been billed as a great showdown—see Kennedy, Biden, Schumer, and the rest square off against Roberts!—turned out, instead, to be a flop. By the time Feinstein attempted to resurrect the hapless toad, the

Democratic opposition to Roberts seemed to suffer an across-the-board collapse. The only question that remained was: Why had the predicted drama failed to materialize?

Of course part of the answer was that Roberts performed brilliantly; Democrats like Joseph Biden and Charles Schumer proclaimed him the best ever to come before the committee. But there was more to it than that, and it had to do with two fundamental Democratic miscalculations.

First, Democrats bet that their techniques of attacking Bush nominees, practiced and polished during several fights over lower appeals-court judgeships, would work against Roberts. They were wrong. Accusing Roberts of concealing his views about certain topics—*Roe v. Wade* and the Commerce Clause, for example—didn't work. Criticizing the Bush administration for declining to release some documents from Roberts's government service two decades ago—that didn't work, either. And neither did arguing that not enough was known about Roberts for senators to cast an informed vote.

The Democrats' strategy was understandable; after all, the tactics had worked—at least in the short run—against some other Bush nominees.

Take Miguel Estrada, the Washington legal star who, like Roberts, was nominated in 2001 for a seat on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia. Estrada was the recipient of extravagant praise on the right, which in turn raised suspicions on the left that he was being groomed to be the next Supreme Court nominee. Democrats, then in control of the Senate after the Jeffords defection, resolved to stop him.

Party leaders settled on a strategy to claim that Estrada, who, like many previous nominees of both parties, had never served on the bench, was a "stealth nominee." Speaking to *The Nation* magazine, Senator Schumer said Estrada was "like a stealth missile—with a nose cone—coming out of the right wing's deepest silo." No one could ever figure out the part about a nose cone, but the general idea was clear enough.

Later, Democrats demanded the release of papers written by Estrada when he worked in the Justice Department's Solicitor General's Office. When the Bush

DARRIN GYGI

administration declined, Democrats had another issue (even though the administration's decision was supported by every living former solicitor general.) And then, at the conclusion of the hearings, Democrats said that they just didn't know enough about Estrada to vote for him. It was enough to unify Democrats against the nomination, which was killed in committee on a straight party-line vote.

When Estrada's name was resubmitted after Republicans regained control of the Senate in November 2002, minority Democrats filibustered, citing all their old objections. In the end, Estrada, frustrated by the process, withdrew his name from consideration. Democrats had won.

To a remarkable degree, the Democratic leadership took a similar approach to Roberts. The reason it failed was simple: With Roberts, people were watching.

"The politics of a nomination to a lower federal court are different in kind, not just in degree, from the politics of a Supreme Court nomination," says Bradford Berenson, a former associate White House counsel for President Bush. "That is in large part because the national press, and the public generally, pay attention to Supreme Court nominations in a way that they don't do to lower courts."

In the appeals-court battles, the only people who are watching are the activists on either side. Things get rough, but there is no real political price to be paid. (Does anyone remember when some Democrats accused the Honduran-born Estrada of not being Hispanic enough?) "Tactics that would be obviously unsavory if examined objectively by the media and the public can be gotten away with at the lower court level," says Berenson.

Not so with a high-profile Supreme Court fight.

The second fundamental miscalculation made by Democrats was their failure to recognize that the so-called "Gang of 14" agreement had greatly weakened their hand in confirmation fights. Last May's deal, in which seven Republican senators agreed not to support the "nuclear option"

to break Democratic filibusters in exchange for the word of seven Democratic senators that they would not support filibusters except under "extraordinary circumstances," effectively doomed the chance of a Supreme Court filibuster. Although Democrats could still try to block a Supreme Court nomination, enough Republican signers of the agreement made it clear that if that were to happen, they would support a move to break the filibuster. And that would be that.

So Democrats find themselves in a galling position. To judge by the polls, George W. Bush is weaker than he has ever been—setbacks in Iraq, \$3-a-gallon gas, and the mess after Hurricane Katrina will do that to a president—yet he is rolling over the opposition party when it comes to the Supreme Court. "The president is leaving his mark and shaping the Court in a fundamental way," says one administration aide. "That's going to be a legacy of generations."

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So what do Democrats do now? The first big decision is how to vote on Roberts when the nomination goes to the full Senate. Will moderates—and presidential hopefuls like Hillary Rodham Clinton—vote for him? The White House will be watching closely, knowing that another Court confirmation is just around the corner. "If they can't vote for Roberts, then they're just not capable of voting for a Republican nominee," says another adminis-

tration source. "If you go into the second nomination, then you don't have to have any pretense that there will be anything other than a party-line vote in the committee, and a 55 vote in the Senate."

And that, of course, is the bottom line. Republicans have those 55 votes, they control the Judiciary Committee, and they have the power—and resolve—to stop a Democratic filibuster. For his part, the president has the responsibility to send the best possible nominee. If he does that, no matter what the polls say, no matter how much a gallon of gas costs, he'll win—and there's not much Democrats can do about it.

■ THE SUPREME COURT II

Would the Chief Play in the Catskills?

On the matter of Roberts and humor

ROB LONG

'HE has," said a television pundit, describing the next Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, John Roberts, "youth on his side."

Youth? I thought to myself. The guy is 50 years old. In Hollywood, where I work, being 50 almost qualifies a person for a handicapped parking spot. Out here, 50 means wisdom, grey eminence, and Omega-3 caplets. A 50-year-old man in Hollywood may have many things on his side—money, bright shirts, an expensive car—but *youth* is never one of them.

Washington, apparently, thinks differently. Of course, the Supreme Court, as I understand it, is some kind of lifetime gig—a permanent booking in the world's slowest-moving, least sexy legal drama—so in that sense, at least, 50 is pretty young. One look at his compact, fit frame and his hearty complexion and it's entirely possible to imagine a 90-year-old John Roberts still wielding the gavel. In other words, if he lays off the trans-fats, drinks green tea, and takes up yoga, John Roberts will end up having spent the vast bulk of his career—and in many ways, his entire life—at the very tippy-top of the professional ladder. Sort of like Ron Howard.

"He has," said another television pundit, describing the next CJ of the SCOTUS, "a terrific sense of humor. He's actually very funny."

Right, I thought to myself. Funny. Funny like Washington, D.C., funny? Funny as in Mark Russell funny? As in *not funny at all*? That kind of funny? Because every lawyer I know who is not right now wasting valuable billable hours torturing out a legal thriller is sweating over a

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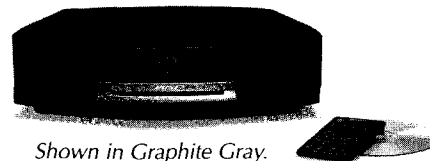
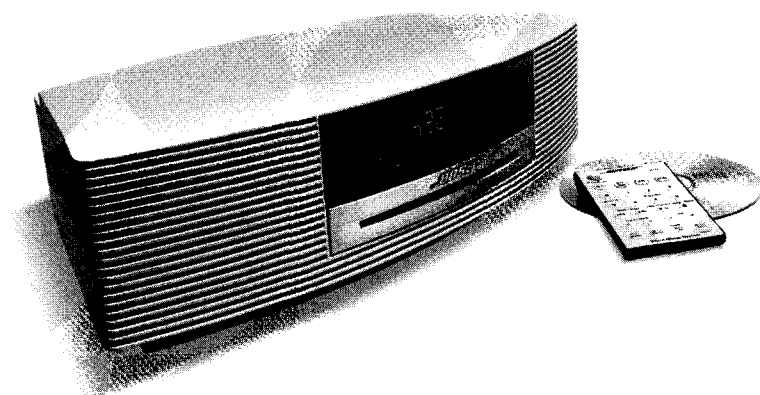
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sit-com pilot, and not one of them is very funny.

"It's a funny area," we say in the writers' room, during a script rewrite, when someone pitches a not-quite-funny joke. "Something like that," one of us will say, "but, you know, *funny*."

When working in the Reagan administration, Roberts spun out a memo commenting on the legality of an anti-drug comic book, paid for by the Keebler cookie company, to be sent to schools using government funds. "Asking us if we object to these subsidiary mailing issues," he cracked wise, "is like bringing a hippopotamus into the house and asking if we object to the small bird perched on its shoulder."

This, the *New York Times* insisted, was a sign of his "humor," which does a lot to explain Maureen Dowd.

Well, it's a funny area. But he's made some elementary mistakes.

In the first place, it's too long. All those syllables at the end—"asking if we object to the small bird perched on its shoulder"—just muddy up the timing and the rhythm of the line, and put unnecessary details way past where the punchline is supposed to be. And then there's the problem with the word picture: Who brings in the hippo? (And notice, if you will, how much funnier the word "hippo" is than "hippopotamus." Faster almost always means funnier.) Who is doing the asking, and the objecting?

What about something like: "Asking us

if we object to these subsidiary mailing issues is beside the point. If a hippo comes crashing into your living room with a tiny bird on its shoulder, you don't complain about the bird."

Okay, not much better. But punchier, right? And the word "bird," which is probably the funniest word in the sentence, is at the end. Always, *always*, put the funny word last.

Another problem with the line—and, from my reading, a continual problem with the judge's prose—is the lack of any "k" sound. I tried to fix that by putting in the words "crash" and "complain," but that doesn't really save the day. "K" words, as Neil Simon teaches us in his last truly funny play, *The Sunshine Boys*, are funny words. In fact, the "k" sound can transform an unfunny idea—Pick an unfunny concept. How about, say, terminal illness?—into something potentially funny. "Lou Gehrig's disease" isn't funny at all. "Cancer," though, has definite comic possibilities. Add another "k" sound—"colon cancer," for instance—and you've got big laugh potential. How to make sure? *Put the funny "k" word at the end of the sentence.* It really can be that simple.

So what to make of a dissenting opinion from his time on the U. S. Court of Appeals, in which Judge Roberts argues that when police searched a car after discovering that its license plates were stolen they didn't violate the Fourth Amendment? "Sometimes," the judge wrote, "a car being driven by an unlicensed driver, with no registration and stolen tags, really does belong to the driver's friend, and sometimes dogs do eat homework, but in neither case is it reasonable to insist on checking out the story before taking other appropriate action."

My idea of career hell—aside from having to write jokes for Whoopi Goldberg—is having to punch up that sentence. There's no funny "k" word, no strong punchline, no set-up, and yet the *Washington Post* decided that it showed the judge's "wry sense of humor." Which explains David Broder.

Then there's the famous quip about women who give up homemaking to become lawyers. "Some might question," he lumbers out the set-up, "whether encouraging homemakers to become lawyers contributes to the common good." There was a brief

flurry of triumph from left-wing agitators who felt that this, finally, was the sexist right-wing neo-anderthal they were looking for: Judge Roberts clearly thinks women should be chained to the house, vacuuming, and not out in the legal workplace, writing complicated employment regulations. It had to be explained to them by impatient right-wing bloggers that the judge was making a joke of the there-are-too-many-lawyers variety. Fine, but if you have to *explain* a joke, then it's not really a joke in the true sense of the word. A joke should explain itself, as compactly and efficiently as possible.

The odd thing is, it's not like he doesn't know his way around the funny. When asked why he lost a case he argued in front of the Supreme Court by a vote of 9 to 0, he muttered, "Because there are only nine justices." Perfect. Short, mordant—and a thinker, too: The laugh comes a few seconds later, when you suddenly get his drift. And when commenting on a professor who was worried about being blacklisted because he once criticized a federal agency, Judge Roberts pointed out the social cachet of being ostracized: "Once you let the word out that there's a blacklist, everybody wants to get on."

Shorter, funnier. See how that works?

Of course, it's not at all clear why the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court should be funny—or worse, should *try* to be funny—in the first place. The best way to be funny, after all—once you get past the "k" words and the funny-bit-at-the-end rule—is to be surprising and unexpected and just a little bit irrational, which aren't usually thought of as terribly judicious traits. Funny people are by nature inconsistent and unreliable and impulsive, which is why there aren't very many truly funny chemical-weapons developers or high-school principals. Or, for that matter, Chief Justices of the Supreme Court.

Which is just as well. A funnier, punchier, "k"-word-using John Roberts would probably end up doing a lot of unexpected stuff on the Supreme Court, which is the last thing we need. So while it appears that the next Chief Justice of the Supreme Court has, unfortunately, a sense of humor, it's nice to know that it's not big enough or funny enough to pose a danger to himself or others, or that most humorless and unfunny of documents, the Constitution.

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■ HURRICANE KATRINA

Soft Corps

The recent, sad history of the Army Corps of Engineers

STEPHEN SPRUIELL

IN the first year of his presidency, Jimmy Carter went to war with Congress over \$239 million worth of funding for 19 public-works projects—most of them involving the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Carter rarely found himself on the right side of a policy issue, but as a trained engineer he could see through the Corps' specious methods of analysis. The waste and fraud angered him. Once, as governor of Georgia, he had described a Corps study as follows: "It became obvious to me that none of the [Corps'] claims was true. The report was primarily promotional literature supporting construction."

All of the various dams and water projects on Carter's "hit list" drained taxpayers in exchange for scant economic benefits, but some invited catastrophe as well. One project, the Auburn Dam, was to be constructed near a fault line in California. A Bureau of Reclamation study had predicted that in the event of an earthquake, dam failure would flood 750,000 people, the state capital, and five military bases.

Though he successfully stymied that project, Carter lost the larger effort to end Congress's use of the Corps as an opportunity for pork-barrel spending. Congress defeated Carter's efforts to block Mo Udall's crusade to irrigate Arizona, Sen. John Stennis's Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway boondoggle, and Sen. J. Bennett Johnston's traffic-free Red River project. Though Carter set ambitious goals for curbing the excess, most of his attempts ended in failure.

The misuse of the Corps for pork projects continues to this day and has left less money available for more important Corps functions. After the Katrina disaster, many in the press criticized the Bush administra-

tion for underfunding the Army Corps of Engineers. These critics missed the point: The problem is not underfunding but the total lack of prioritization that characterizes the Corps' activities.

An example: According to Corps data, the ten most heavily used waterways in the United States carry 97 percent of the traffic and get 74 percent of the operations and maintenance funding. Meanwhile, the 18 waterways that carry the other 3 percent get 26 percent of the funding. Nowhere is this disparity between important and unimportant spending more evident than in the state of Louisiana, which receives more funding for Corps projects than any other state.

To see where the money has gone, start with the aforementioned Red River in northern Louisiana, now known as the J. Bennett Johnston Waterway. Despite carrying only 0.14 percent of the traffic on the nation's inland-waterway system, the Johnston Waterway has cost taxpayers over \$2 billion and counting. Louisiana's congressmen asked for \$11.4 million in additional funding in the fiscal 2005 budget.

Travel down the Mississippi to the Industrial Canal Lock project in New Orleans. Construction on this \$748 million project began in 2000, even though traffic through the canal has steadily declined. A study undertaken by Taxpayers for Common Sense and the National Wildlife Federation discovered that "the Corps used predictions of a 50 percent increase in barge traffic to justify construction [while] in reality, barge traffic has decreased 50 percent since 1988—an obvious trend the Corps avoided by excluding data from 1994-1997 from its 1998 economic study."

Finally, travel through the Industrial Canal to the Mississippi River Gulf Outlet (MRGO, or "Mr. Go"), a project maintained year after year despite high costs, declining traffic, and expert predictions that, if a hurricane like Katrina were ever to hit New Orleans, it would act as a funnel for the storm surge, greatly amplifying it. MRGO is the Louisiana equivalent of the Auburn Dam, only MRGO was actually built.

Dr. Ivor van Heerden of the Louisiana State University Hurricane Center explains the geography: "The MRGO and the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway [GIWW] join together in an area known as the funnel. You have the Industrial Canal in the middle of New Orleans. Heading off eastward

from it is a canal that opens into a big Y—that's where the GIWW and MRGO merge. That's one of the very weak points in the system. When you get a surge such as Katrina, the water flowing westward amplifies the surge and leads to levee overtopping in those areas. There was very significant erosion during that levee overtopping during Katrina. It's the design and location of the levee systems which creates this funnel effect, which caused levee overtopping and erosion and added to the flooding of eastern Orleans and St. Bernard's parishes."

Van Heerden relates all this in the soft, tired voice of a man who has been repeating himself for a long time. For years, hurricane experts have warned that the confluence of canals east of New Orleans could amplify storm surges by 20 to 40 percent. The LSU Hurricane Center's Hassan Mashriqui told Michael Grunwald of the *Washington Post* that he had warned emergency planners of this "critical and fundamental flaw" as recently as this past May. "But nobody did anything," he said.

Shortly after the Corps completed MRGO in 1965, Hurricane Betsy hit New Orleans and sent a storm surge up the channel into St. Bernard's Parish, resulting in massive flooding. Betsy killed more than 70 people and caused over \$1 billion worth of damage. Since then, MRGO has eroded over 20,000 acres of wetlands, which left New Orleans even more exposed when Katrina's storm surge hit. Residents of New Orleans have long opposed the channel. Polled in 2004, a majority of St. Bernard's Parish voters said they'd like to see MRGO closed down, but support from Congress, the Corps, and such special interests as the Port of New Orleans have kept MRGO open. An LSU study estimated that despite steadily declining traffic (now down to 3 percent of all the port's cargo), the cost of maintaining MRGO increased 52 percent from 1995 to 2005. Last year, the Corps spent \$13 million dredging MRGO.

Taxpayers for Common Sense vice president Steve Ellis co-authored an extensive study of the Corps. "Ever since [the late 1990s] I have heard talk that the Corps was going to close MRGO," he says. "Even from the Corps, I heard, 'It's a bust of a project, traffic is declining, it's having very negative side effects.' I recognized by 2002, or 2003, that there was a public face

Mr. Spruiell writes the media blog for National Review Online.

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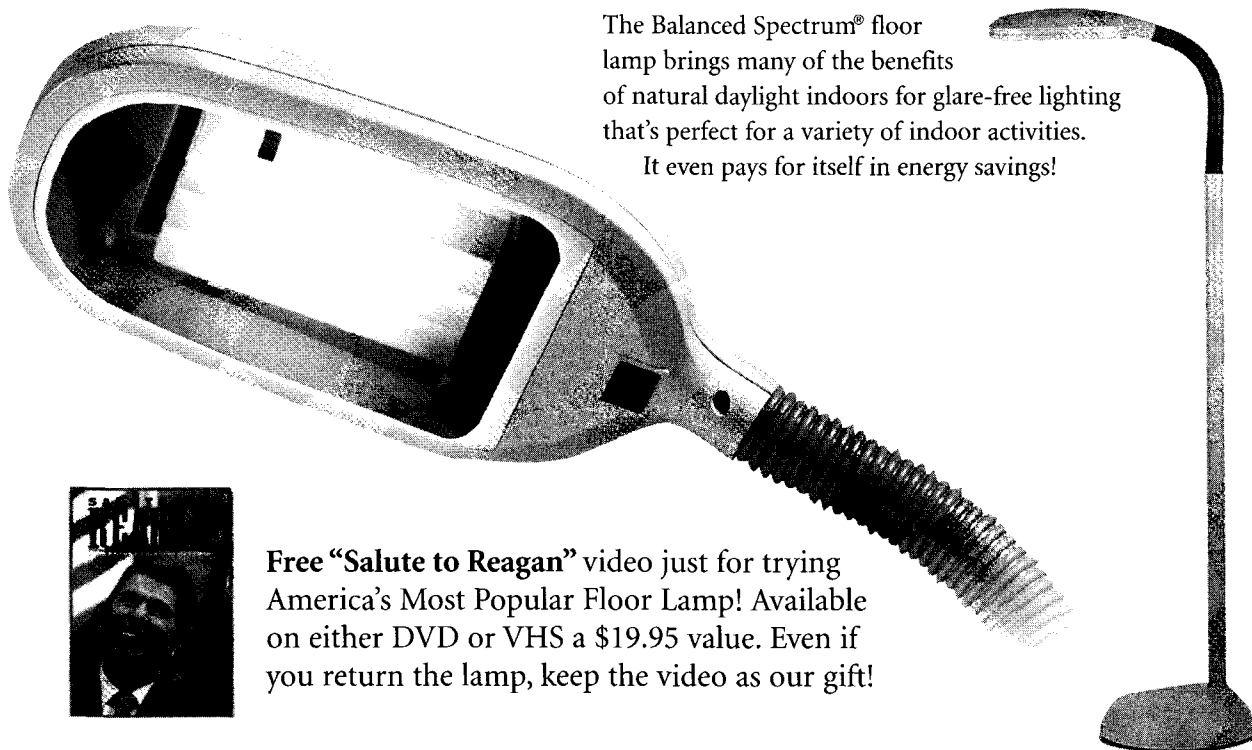
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and a private reality, and the private reality was the truth. There was nothing happening about it.”

George W. Bush has been the most ambitious president since Carter when it comes to fighting wasteful spending on public works, but he has faced considerable congressional opposition. As Grunwald reported on Slate in 2003, Bush has “cut the Corps budget, frozen all new construction, and ordered the Corps to focus on projects with real benefits and less outrageous environmental costs.” For example, he has refused to provide any funding in his budget for the Industrial Lock Project, even though Congress has found \$70 million for it. And when the Corps presented an economic analysis full of reasons for keeping MRGO open, the Bush administration ordered them to redo it.

The administration came up with prioritization criteria for the Corps in 2004, and it listed nine projects in its 2006 budget proposal that deserved high-priority status—including flood control along the Mississippi River in New Orleans. Critics, including Sidney Blumenthal, argue that Bush’s crackdown on the Corps left New Orleans unprepared for Katrina. Hardly. While Bush proposed, and Congress approved, less funding for flood-control projects than the Corps requested, the Corps issued a statement after Katrina declaring that none of the projects they had undertaken could have prepared New Orleans for a storm of Katrina’s force. Indeed, one Corps project—MRGO—almost certainly contributed to the flooding in parts of New Orleans.

In order to firm up his wobbling political support, President Bush has announced an enormous amount of federal spending designed to renovate New Orleans. When asked how Congress planned to pay for all this, House majority leader Tom DeLay told reporters at his weekly briefing that there was simply no fat left to cut in the federal budget. “My answer to those that want to offset the spending is, Sure, bring me the offsets, I’ll be glad to do it.”

DeLay should consider—for starters—drawing up a hit list, just like Jimmy Carter’s, of Army Corps of Engineers projects that, like MRGO, lack any reasonable economic justification, or could easily be devolved to state or local governments, or could be handed off to the private sector. There are no more excuses. **NR**

■ HURRICANE KATRINA II

The Global-Warming God

Must it now be appeased?

PATRICK J. MICHAELS

FOR years, I have been concerned that a major hurricane strike on New Orleans could provoke legislation on global warming that will do absolutely nothing about tropical cyclones, but harm the U.S. economy for decades. We began seeing the shape of things to come when Robert F. Kennedy Jr. claimed that Katrina’s severity was related to President Bush’s reluctance to cap carbon-dioxide emissions, and Hillary Clinton declared she wanted to establish a commission to investigate the government’s response to the hurricane.

Hurricane Katrina’s magnitude was not changed by global warming. In fact, despite a hundred news stories to the contrary, it’s not at all clear that any such warming will result in more frequent, let alone more intense, tropical cyclones. Take, for example, the recent rise in hurricane frequency in the Atlantic Basin; it’s as if we have returned to the 1930s, ’50s, and ’60s, when storm activity reached a ferocious height before settling down for several decades.

Keep in mind, however, that there are some differences between now and then. Today’s hurricanes tend to concentrate in Florida and the Gulf of Mexico, whereas in mid-century they repeatedly struck the Atlantic coast—all the way to Canada. This is worth noting because, in a warming world, simple reasoning predicts that activity should have moved *north*, not south. Obviously things are not so simple with hurricanes and climate change.

But the North Atlantic is just one of the world’s many hurricane basins. In general, there are more tropical cyclones per

Mr. Michaels is senior fellow in environmental studies at the Cato Institute and professor of environmental sciences at the University of Virginia.

year in the eastern North Pacific—off the Mexican coast—but few notice them because they rarely hit land as consequential cyclones. Instead, they peter out as they migrate westward into cooler waters. In fact, only one subtropical ocean, the South Atlantic, has virtually none of these storms.

So, rather than focusing exclusively on what’s happening in our provincial part of the North Atlantic, we should be asking what is happening to hurricane activity around the planet. And the answer is . . . nothing. More specifically, there has been no significant movement in either frequency or strength despite a warming trend since 1975, a cooling trend in mid-century, and a warming trend in the early 1900s that was similar to what we see today.

Yes, there is a much-cited paper in the scientific magazine *Nature* by Kerry Emanuel that claims that hurricanes have doubled in power in the last 30 years. But there are at least four manuscripts in review at *Nature* that challenge this result. Indeed, people who normally stay out of the global-warming catfight, like the University of Colorado’s Roger Pielke Jr., have been blogging that the peer-review process at *Science*—*Nature*’s American competitor—has been badly compromised on the subject of global warming and weather-induced damages.

The Emanuel argument simply does not stand up to scrutiny. Put it this way: Since Atlantic hurricanes have a roughly equal chance of striking the U.S., and if they had doubled in power, then surely the amount of damage they have caused—after adjusting for population and property-value changes—would show an obvious upward trend. But, when allowing for these factors, as Pielke has, we cannot detect any such tendency. In any case, if hurricanes *had* actually doubled in power, then the insurance companies would already have been blown to smithereens. They’re still here.

Another paper, by Peter Webster and colleagues, that argues along similar lines has just appeared in *Science* magazine. It attempts to show that while the global frequency of tropical systems shows no trend since the 1970s, the percentage of extremely strong hurricanes has been increasing relative to the weaker storm systems. This is an example of very selective data citation using post-1970 satellite observations of



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tropical systems. However, in the North Atlantic, hurricane-hunter reconnaissance flights have been flying since 1944. Guess what? Between 1944 and 1970, the percentage of extremely strong hurricanes *declined* relative to the weaker storms. Relative storm strength in the '40s and '50s is similar to what it is today. So, over the longer term, there has been no trend in hurricane intensity. How could *Science's* peer reviewers have missed this?

What of research published a year ago by Tom Knutson, which showed that hurricane winds will increase by 6 percent over the next 80 years as a result of planetary warming? Hurricane frequency varies tremendously from year to year and between decades, so such a small change couldn't be discerned for at least 50 years. Moreover, Knutson's work assumes that ocean-surface temperatures will continue to warm while nothing else changes. But this isn't realistic, for warming may increase the frequency of El Niño—poison to Atlantic hurricanes. Warming may also have an impact on the high-pressure systems that generate the trade winds, thereby placing hurricanes in less favorable environments, and consequently making them less able to inflict major damage.

Clearly, a lot of things can be overlooked in a computer simulation. For example, in the Knutson paper, over half

of the simulated behavior of hurricanes is related to the warming of the sea surface. This is an eminently testable hypothesis, as we have a century's worth of data on Atlantic hurricanes and water temperature. When the statistical correspondence between the two is checked, just 10 percent of inter-annual hurricane behavior can be traced to temperature changes. That's right, 90 percent of hurricane fluctuation from year to year is related to factors *other* than ocean temperature.

How could this be? Let's define a perfect hurricane, like Katrina, as one whose surface barometric pressure approaches 26.5 inches. A storm this strong requires rare conditions. Warm water is just one: That's why there have been only four such storms in the Atlantic over the last 100 years. There must also be, for example, an efficient venting mechanism at the top of the storm, at around 40,000 feet, and there can be no dry air intruding into its circulation. In reality, there are often many bands of relatively dry air within a hurricane, owing to the rainstorms feeding into the eye that gather up moisture. When a significant dry band gets near the center, the winds will drop. Katrina was probably ready to undergo one of these wind-reduction cycles, but, unfortunately, New Orleans got in the way.

Yet still we hear that warmer oceans mean that storms will become more ferocious. We shouldn't. One of the peculiarities of hurricane behavior is that there is a threshold, at 28°C, where storms reach an intensity of Category 3 ("severe"). (In the last 50 years there have been just two such storms over cooler waters.) But once the temperature exceeds 28°C, there is no relationship between warmer water and intensity. At any temperature above the threshold, each storm has an equal chance of reaching Category 4 or 5.

Every August, the surface temperature of the Gulf of Mexico exceeds that threshold. This year it was very warm south of Louisiana: 31°C—about as hot as it was in 1997 and 1998. And, given that the Gulf reaches the magic 28°C threshold every year, no matter whether the planet is warming or cooling, there is no practicable, economical policy that can ever drive temperatures below this figure.

I don't expect this information to have any effect on policy. I'm just shouting into the hurricane.

■ PUBLIC POLICY

Debating Immigration

An analyst defends herself, and her critics rejoin

TAMAR JACOBY

I RARELY agree with anything that NR's John O'Sullivan and Mark Krikorian say about immigration, but they have set just the right standard for the debate: realistic or utopian. Which view is more realistic, theirs or mine?

The O'Sullivan-Krikorian stance, as argued in the September 12 issue, holds that we can seal our borders, do without immigrants, and easily drive the 11 million illegal immigrants already here to leave the country by enforcing existing laws. I believe that immigration is driven by market forces, and that by and large it is good for the U.S. Our challenge today is to find a way to control it—not pretend that it doesn't exist or that we can simply wish it away.

Let's start with the economy. I think that those who say we don't need immigrants have their heads buried in the sand. Their claim may have been true 45 years ago when half of all American men did not finish high school and became unskilled laborers. But today less than 10 percent of American men drop out of high school—and, paradoxically, our increasingly automated service economy is more dependent than ever on low-skilled workers. The baby-boom generation is retiring from the workforce, and native-born fertility rates are in decline. The problem isn't just that Americans don't want to work out in the fields or up on roofs in the hot sun; employers can't pay them enough to make that kind of job worthwhile for most people. The real problem is that there aren't enough native-born workers to sustain the industries that rely on unskilled labor—from agriculture to food-processing to health care to construction—much less

Tamar Jacoby is a senior fellow at the Manhattan Institute.

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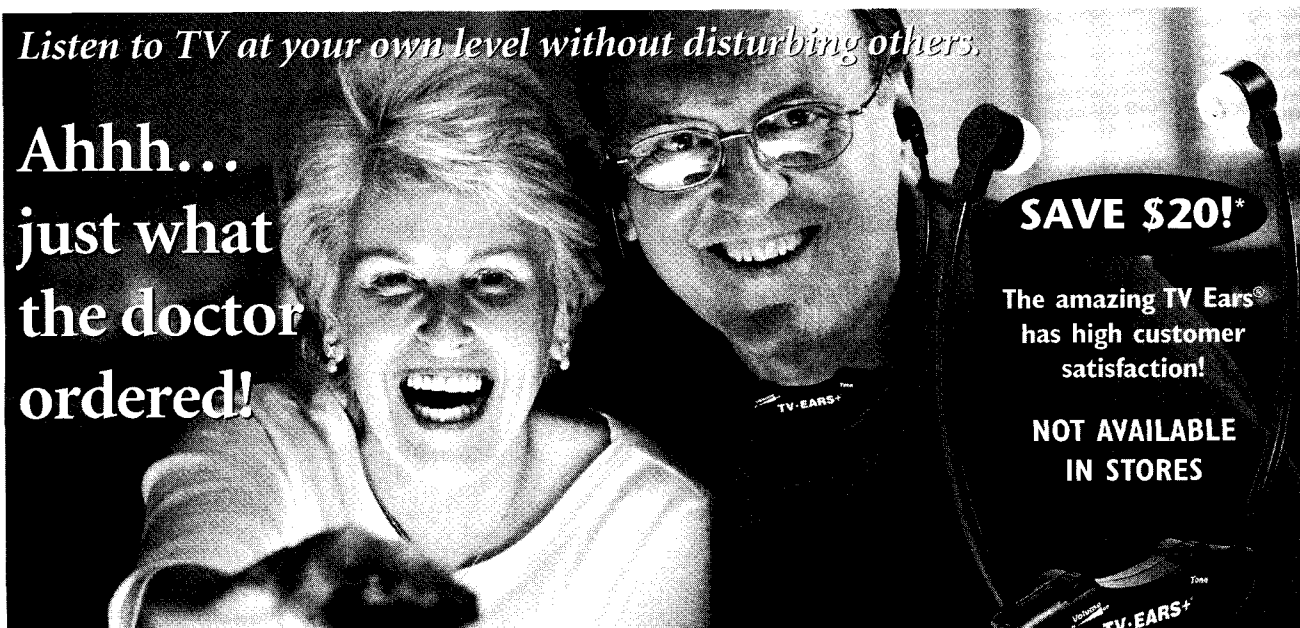
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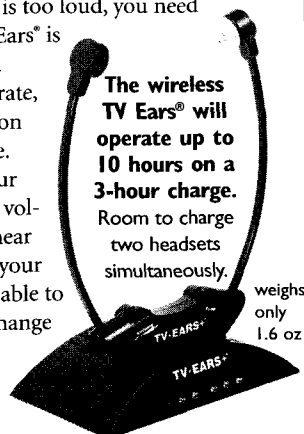
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fuel the growth of these sectors, or related ones. John O'Sullivan calls me unrealistic, but his denial of this basic modern fact of life strikes me as the ultimate in irresponsible wishful thinking.

Then there's the fantasy of dramatically reducing the number of illegal immigrants who enter the country each year. It's not physically impossible—I'll grant that. If I thought, as NATIONAL REVIEW does, that immigration was destroying the fabric of American life—if I believed that most of today's newcomers were not assimilating and never would, and were instead congealing into a permanent underclass—then I too would favor forgoing the economic growth immigrants make possible. And I would also favor creating the virtual police state that would be necessary to reduce immigrant numbers in the dramatic way O'Sullivan and Krikorian advocate. But today's newcomers are assimilating—learning English as fast as or faster than the immigrants of a hundred years ago, moving up the economic ladder, intermarrying at unprecedented rates.

And make no mistake about the kinds of draconian measures that would be required to stop the flow: a 2,000-mile wall on the border, maybe an electric fence, armed immigration agents empowered to stop and interrogate anyone at anytime, a national ID card, regular raids in American workplaces, barrio sweeps, highway checkpoints, and interior patrols. Remember Prohibition? It showed that we can suppress almost anything, if we're willing to pay the price. But how likely would that be in the United States today? How realistic is it to think that most Americans would find it acceptable to live under a permanent state of siege?

That's not to say that we can't control immigration, or shouldn't. On the contrary: Of course we need to retake control of our borders. Of course we need to close down the black market that currently sustains much of the American economy—8 million illegal workers and growing. We also need to know the name of every foreigner in the country—need to know if he has a criminal record and where to find him if his name appears on an international watch-list. Most important, we need to

reestablish the rule of law: to restore the credibility of our statutes and our national respect for the authority behind them. The real question isn't if, but how. What's the *realistic* strategy for retaking control? No less than the social order and our national security depends on finding a plausible, practical approach.

A realistic strategy would begin by acknowledging the fact of contemporary immigration: our labor needs, and the international supply and demand that generates a robust and continuing flow of foreign workers. Then, instead of forcing roughly a third of this flow underground, as we do today with unrealistically low immigration quotas, we would raise those ceilings to accommodate the workers we need. This isn't just sleight of hand—making the illegal flow legal by legalizing it, as John O'Sullivan suggests. This is the only workable way to retake control: by replacing our unrealistic, unenforceable

law with limits we can make stick, and then enforcing those new limits to the letter. It's the difference between Prohibition and liquor licenses. Not only will it be much easier to enforce more honest quotas, but we will be far likelier to muster the political will to do so. Only when we break through our denial, and set our quotas more in sync with our labor needs, will we move beyond the nudge-nudge, wink-wink hypocrisy that now undermines enforcement of our immigration laws.

The new system would need teeth—real teeth—on the border and in the interior. Sens. John Cornyn and Jon Kyl weren't far from the mark in the immigration-reform bill they introduced in July: more men, more money, more detention beds, more-aggressive prosecutions, enhanced technology, stiffer sentences, and some rethinking of the role state and local police have in enforcing immigration law. Above all—the *sine qua non*—we need to make it impossible for illegal immigrants to work in the U.S. And in order to do so, we must develop a mandatory electronic employment-verification system, something like point-of-sale credit-card verification—ideally by swipe-card—in every U.S. workplace. John O'Sullivan will say it won't happen, will say I'm being unreal-

istic. But the fact is that something like this is proposed in every immigration bill on the table today, including the McCain-Kennedy legislation introduced earlier this summer. Even employers, most of whom would prefer a stable, legal workforce, are increasingly prepared to accept electronic verification—provided it comes with more realistic immigration quotas.

Finally, the third pillar of a more realistic approach: We can't build a new airtight, lawful system on top of a rotten, illegal foundation. We need to do something about the 11 million illegal immigrants already in the country. Yes, of course, this is morally difficult; no one wants to reward or encourage unlawful behavior. (Not to mention, as Mark Krikorian points out, that it will be a vast, bureaucratic challenge to administer any process that allows several million people to adjust their status.) But that's the thing about reality: It's often difficult and intractable—and sooner or later we must face up to the reality created by 30 years of willfully blind immigration policy.

After years, and sometimes decades, in this country, many of the 11 million own homes and businesses. Others have U.S.-born children—citizens and illegal immigrants in the same family. Some will go home if prodded, as Krikorian suggests, but many—perhaps several million—would only be driven further underground by what he euphemistically labels an "attrition strategy." Talk about make-believe: Even if it worked, attrition would be a disaster, all but crippling the economy. But it almost assuredly won't work. Most of the 11 million would remain in the U.S., as illegal as ever and as much of a threat to our security. The only people who would benefit would be the smugglers and forgers whose intensified help the immigrants would need to stay ahead of the law.

John O'Sullivan and Mark Krikorian are right to warn us. The worst mistake we can make is to pursue an unrealistic policy. The choice is ours: We can retake control of the border and restore order in our communities. Or we can continue with our heads in the sand, denying reality and paying the price—eroding the rule of law and endangering our security.

MARK KRIKORIAN REPLIES: Tamar Jacoby is ubiquitous—from the *Wall Street Journal* and *Washington Post* to *The*

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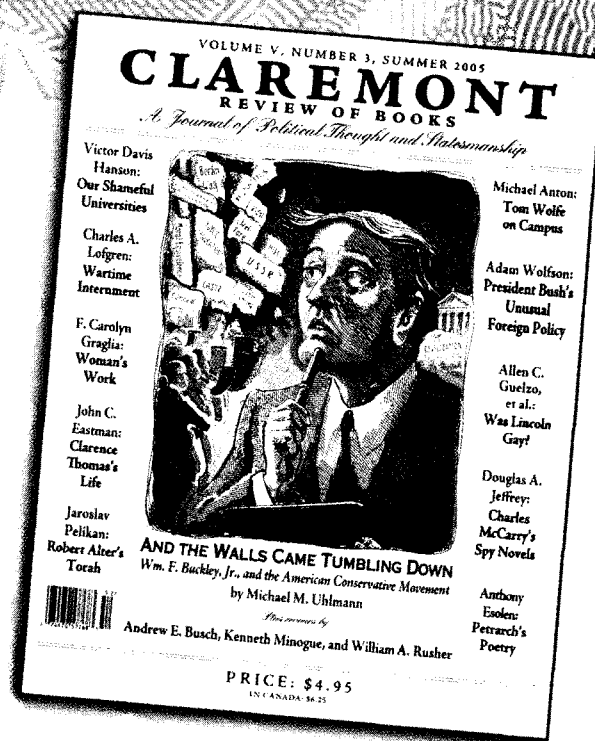
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Weekly Standard and *New Republic*, she has been the most enterprising and persuasive booster for an amnesty allowing 11 million illegal aliens to remain in the United States.

But she hasn't been persuasive enough.

Let's start, as she did, with the economy. She says that those of us who dispute the need for immigrant labor have our heads in the sand. If she means that our economy has managed to accommodate 11 million illegal aliens, and that their magical, overnight disappearance would be disruptive, then of course she's right. But that's not what she has in mind. Instead, her contention is that America is running out of a vital resource—high-school dropouts who become unskilled laborers—and thus needs to keep importing workers “to sustain the industries that rely on unskilled labor.”

When employers say this, we all understand that they're seeking government-approved access to cheap labor outside the regular system, a government “subsidy” for their low-tech, labor-intensive operations. For instance, California tomato farmers testified in the 1960s that “the use of braceros [Mexican guestworkers] is absolutely essential to the survival of the tomato industry.” But that labor program was ended anyway, and illegal immigrants did not immediately pick up the slack—so the farmers concluded that their investment in lobbying hadn't paid off, and instead they invested in harvest machinery. The result: a quadrupling of production over the following 30 years, and a drop in the post-inflation retail price of tomato products.

In fact, no economist has ever discovered a significant net economic benefit from immigration. Perhaps she knows something they don't, but I suspect that Jacoby is just acting out the old economist joke about assuming something that doesn't exist.

Her description of what would be needed to actually enforce current immigration law is just as inaccurate. She imagines a “permanent state of siege” requiring “draconian measures.” In reality, the consistent application of perfectly ordinary law-enforcement tools would be enough: an end to government's winking at illegal

employment; a requirement that new hires be verified through the simple online tool that the immigration service already provides (and that I use at my immigration think tank); streamlined deportation rules; Israeli-style fencing along the parts of the border most often used by illegal immigrants. This will not make the problem vanish overnight. It is instead a genuinely conservative approach to a long-neglected problem, an approach that allows us through attrition to shrink the number of illegals over time.

As in all things, we would eventually reach a point of diminishing returns, where further reductions in the number of illegals might require police-state tactics. Then Jacoby's amnesty would at least be a legitimate topic for discussion. But amnesty shouldn't even be on the table until *after* the authorities have demonstrated a commitment to enforce the law—a commitment that is almost entirely lacking in this administration.

Our immigration strategy should be clear: enforcement first.

JOHN O'SULLIVAN REPLIES: Start with the contradictions. In paragraph five, Ms. Jacoby warns against my “fantasy” of reducing illegal immigration on the grounds that it would require “a 2,000-mile wall on the border, maybe an electric fence, armed immigration agents empowered to stop and interrogate anyone at any time, a national ID card, regular raids in American workplaces, barrio sweeps, highway checkpoints, and interior patrols”—and would not work even then.

By paragraph six, however, she is insisting that her own policy would entail “clos[ing] down the black market that currently sustains much of the American economy—8 million illegal workers and growing.” And when she reaches paragraph eight, she concedes this will require “more men, more money, more detention beds, more-aggressive prosecutions, enhanced technology, stiffer sentences, and some rethinking of the role state and local police have in enforcing immigration law. Above all—the *sine qua non*—we need to make it impossible for illegal

immigrants to work in the U.S. And in order to do so, we must develop a mandatory electronic employment-verification system . . . in every U.S. workplace.”

Well, it's a lady's privilege to change her mind—but in the space of four paragraphs? Let me ignore that her description of the “attrition” method of reducing illegal immigration is a travesty, as Mark Krikorian establishes in his response. But even if it were accurate, why would her “draconian” methods work when mine would fail? Her explanation is that she would admit more legal immigrants in line with our economy's “needs.” This isn't just “making the illegal flow legal by legalizing it,” she assures us (though it is plainly that), but a balanced strategy. Having eliminated the “need” for illegal workers, she would then enjoy public and employer support for rounding up the few remaining ones.

Alas, this argument is another example of the “economics without prices” in which Ms. Jacoby specializes. Her newly legal workers would be entitled to the minimum wage and subject to Social Security and other tax obligations. That would price many of them out of the “black market” jobs they now do. Either those jobs would go undone—Ms. Jacoby's main charge against Mr. Krikorian and me—or they would continue to be performed by illegal immigrants at lower prices. Almost certainly the latter.

Ms. Jacoby would therefore find herself employing draconian methods against an illegal immigrant workforce almost as large as now—and possibly larger since she has yet again ignored our experience that legal immigration acts as a magnet, not as a substitute, for the illegal kind. At the same time she (and President Bush) propose the mammoth bureaucratic tasks of legalizing the 11 million illegals already here and managing a much larger legal inflow. It is a recipe not for a more orderly job market but for maximizing chaos.

Interestingly, in her advocacy of the Bush immigration “reforms,” Ms. Jacoby does not claim that they will make native-born Americans better off. Nor even raise per capita income in the U.S. Nor improve the income and job prospects of low-paid Americans already badly harmed by mass immigration. Nor hold down the high and rising fiscal costs of illegal immigration.

These are not unimportant.

NR

**No economist
has ever
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Hillary Prepares

With her eye on the Oval, the senator pretends she's out of center field

KATE O'BEIRNE

'CLINTON for President—The Sequel” has been receiving rave notices during its road show in New York and Washington, D.C. Hillary Clinton looks like a sure bet for reelection to the Senate next year, and surveys show her lapping the field of potential Democratic presidential candidates. She is widely admired as a clever, centrist consensus-builder. A top Republican strategist warns his party, “We underestimate her at our peril.”

But while it's true that no Clinton should ever be underestimated, neither should Democrats underestimate the formidable obstacle Hillary Clinton's presidential production faces: its lead.

A single memorable photograph from Hillary's years in the public spotlight illustrates the intimidating determination that marks her political ambitions. It was early January of 1998, and her husband was preparing for his deposition in Paula Jones's sexual-harassment suit. During their New Year's vacation in the Virgin Islands, the presidential couple were “caught” dancing together on the beach. In Bill's arms, Hillary gazed lovingly at her affectionate husband, her 50-year-old body revealed in all its bathing-suited glory. Most middle-aged women dread leaving a dressing room in a bathing suit, yet Hillary readily posed for a photo bound to grace front pages around the world. It was a perfect façade of normal matrimony, and succeeded brilliantly in distracting attention from the Jones suit. I remember thinking, “Wow, it's true that she will do absolutely anything for the sake of political survival.” In the months ahead, after Monica Lewinsky had been exposed as Bill's latest paramour, Hillary would endure even greater public indignities. But she stuck with her husband—and, in the end, she had her reward: a seat in the Senate.

Her recent press notices praise the pose she is now striking in order to position herself for the races to come. *The Nation* exults

that “Homespun Hillary” wows the rubes in upstate New York with a rural accent, an impressive command of farming issues, and a winning disdain for city folk. Talking about city restaurateurs' demand for specialty produce, she charmingly says, “We need all those little funny things you don't know what they are when they put 'em on your plate.” In such settings, “she effortlessly wins over people who, we're told, are supposed to hate her.” One Hillary supporter explained, “Upstate—that's all the Midwest. That's Cleveland and Detroit. The themes that will be tested, we'll see how they work also on the national level.” She's playing in the sticks on her way to Broadway.

Haunted by the flip-flop charge hung around John Kerry's neck last year, Team Hillary anxiously insists that there is no rescripting going on. Her media adviser Mandy Grunwald says, “People have gained a more complete view of Hillary in the Senate than they had when she was in the White House. People are getting past the cartoon version of her and seeing that she's culturally moderate and sensitive to rural and small-town America. That mix has always been a part of her.”

Self-deluded reporters demand precious little evidence before touting Hillary Clinton as a centrist, and hype at every opportunity her collaboration with retrograde rightists. She has appeared in public with Newt Gingrich to propose computerizing medical-billing records! She sponsored legislation with Rick Santorum to study the effects of media violence on children! She and Sam Brownback are against blood and gore in video games! It's as though such unremarkable cooperation on uncontroversial issues had expunged Hillary's record as a diehard partisan, the liberal conscience and combative half of a 30-year-old, fiercely ambitious political partnership.

ABORTION AND IMMIGRATION

On two issues in particular, Clinton has won praise for her supposed moderation. She is said to have mollified the pro-life crowd with her call for common ground in the abortion wars, and to have outflanked President Bush on the right with a tough stand against illegal immigration. Noting such “red-state-friendly pronouncements,” the *San Diego Union-Tribune* warned that “Republicans salivating over having Sen. Clinton to run against should be careful what they wish for.” A closer examination of her record and rhetoric, however, suggests that a Hillary presidential candidacy could indeed be a tasty treat for Republicans.

Marking the anniversary of *Roe v. Wade* this January, Senator Clinton spoke to 1,000 fellow abortion supporters in Albany. She referred to abortion as “a sad, even tragic choice to many, many women” and declared, “I, for one, respect those who believe with all their hearts and conscience that there are no circumstances under which any abortion should ever be available.” She called for cooperation across the abortion divide to reduce the number of unintended pregnancies. Mort Kondracke, executive editor of *Roll Call*, called the speech “a political masterstroke.” She was, supposedly, aligning herself with mainstream views: Polls consistently show that a majority of Americans want to see abortion either outlawed or strictly limited.

But she also said that *Roe v. Wade* “is in more jeopardy than ever,” and she was not ambivalent about her support for abortion-on-demand. As First Lady, she “saw firsthand the costs to women when the government controls their reproductive-health decisions.” Where had she seen this? In Communist Romania, women were rounded up, stripped, and examined by a government doctor with the secret police looking on, and a “celibacy tax” was slapped on families that failed to conceive. In China, the government monitored women’s menstrual cycles and their use of contraceptives. By adducing such examples, Hillary implied that any restriction on abortion puts women on a continuum of oppression that terminates in totalitarian coercion. Whether she was unaware of the absurdity of the comparisons or cynically indifferent to it, she no doubt delighted her audience of “family-planning” practitioners.

Hillary’s faux-centrism on abortion is nothing new: In 1999, at a National Abortion and Reproductive Rights Action League (NARAL) dinner celebrating the *Roe v. Wade* decision, she called for common ground to achieve “our goal of keeping abortion safe, legal, and rare into the next century.” But it was quite a different Hillary who ran for the Senate the following year. Her opponent, Rep. Rick Lazio, described himself as “pro-choice,” but parted ways with abortion absolutists on three issues: He opposed federal funding for abortion, backed a ban on partial-birth abortion, and supported parental-notification legislation. Owing to these common-ground positions, NARAL’s president Kate Michelman declared, “He’s not pro-choice.” Candidate Clinton agreed, and campaigned as though she were running against Operation

Rescue’s Randall Terry. “Abortion rights will be an important issue in this race,” she said. And she made a pledge: “The estimates are that the next Senate is going to confirm three or four justices. I will not vote to confirm judges who do not believe that *Roe v. Wade* should be upheld.” Rick Lazio, by contrast, refused to adopt a litmus test on judges. Abortion-rights groups trumpeted Clinton’s pledge in campaign literature and TV ads and slammed Lazio for his refusal to promise the same.

In the Senate, Clinton has been true to her word. She has voted twice against banning partial-birth abortions. She opposed a bill that would require murderers of pregnant women to be charged with two federal crimes—one for the death of the mother, the other for the death of the child—and she opposes a bill that prohibits transporting minors across state lines for abortions without parental consent. On the judicial question, her allies don’t seem a bit worried that she will vote to confirm John Roberts as chief justice of the Supreme Court. “She’s a passionate supporter of the right to choose, and I don’t see that equation changing,” says Kelli Conlin of NARAL New York.

In Senator Clinton’s ballyhooed pronouncements on illegal immigration, there is also less than meets the ear. During a WABC radio interview in February 2003, she said, “I am, you know, adamantly against illegal immigrants.” She criticized employers for hiring illegals and said she wanted to see an entry-and-exit system that tracks non-citizens. These remarks have smitten no less an opponent of illegal immigration than Pat Buchanan, who thinks Hillary Clinton “has spoken out against illegal immigration with a forthrightness that makes Bush sound like a talking head for La Raza.”

But just how forthright was Hillary Clinton about this antipathy to illegal immigrants when she spoke to the National Council of La Raza in Philadelphia this July? She talked about education, health care, and the need to tackle asthma and lead poisoning among Hispanic children. The only mention of illegal immigrants came when she highlighted her support for legislation that would give amnesty to tens of thousands of illegal-immigrant students who graduate from high school and help them get in-state tuition at universities. The senator who is “adamantly against illegal immigrants” got no fewer than three standing ovations from the La Raza crowd.

She also supports a bill that would provide amnesty to up to 1 million illegal agricultural workers—a bill that Sen. Dianne Feinstein, the California Democrat, calls a “huge magnet” for illegal immigration—and has backed Ted Kennedy’s proposal to grant permanent-resident status to some illegal aliens who have been in the U.S. for at least five years. Although she maintains that security at our borders must be “paramount,” she opposes the Bush administration’s proposal that anyone entering the U.S. from Mexico or Canada be required to show his passport, on the grounds that it would hurt “tourism and the regional economy” in upstate New York.



‘Caught’ dancing

Q ■ Why do more than 900,000 teenagers sell drugs¹ but not alcohol or cigarettes?

A ■ Because alcohol and tobacco are regulated and sold through stores.

According to the federally funded Monitoring the Future Survey, "Marijuana has been almost universally available to American high school seniors over at least the past 28 years."²

Since 1972 marijuana use by teenagers has increased from 14%³ to today where 16% of 8th graders and 45% of 12th graders have tried pot.⁴ In contrast, daily cigarette use by high school seniors has declined from 27% in 1975⁵ to 16% in 2004!⁶

Credible education — as opposed to exaggerated claims — actually works! Prohibition makes things worse: more availability, more violence, unidentifiable and possibly impure drugs, and a system that exploits teens to enrich drug dealers.

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Notes:

- 1) "Alcohol Use and Delinquent Behaviors among Youths," April 2005, SAMHSA, USDHHS. 2) Monitoring the Future, "National Survey Results on Drug Use, 1975-2003: Volume I," 2004. 3) "Marihuana: A Signal of Misunderstanding," Natl. Comm. on Marihuana & Drug Abuse, March 1972. 4) Monitoring the Future, "Overview of Key Findings 2004," 2005 5) Monitoring the Future, "National Survey Results." 6) Monitoring the Future, "Overview."

There is a pattern here: Clinton has a long history of taking positions entirely at odds with the words she proclaims from the house-tops. This is apparent in almost any analysis of her voting record. Hillary's "Liberal Quotient" from the Americans for Democratic Action (ADA) was 95 last year, a tie with Sens. Barbara Boxer and Dick Durbin. Her lifetime ADA rating is also 95, outscoring both Ted Kennedy (89.16) and John Kerry (88.7). On social issues, *National Journal* rated Clinton as more liberal than 82 percent of her Senate colleagues. NARAL has scored her a perfect 100 percent since her election. In 2008, she might be found, Kerry-like, stomping through Ohio fields with some poor goose in her gun-sight, but so far the National Rifle Association has graded her an "F."

Senator Clinton opposed all of President Bush's tax cuts and, according to the National Taxpayers Union, is the second-biggest spender in the Senate, bested only by Jon Corzine of New Jersey. *The Nation* approvingly notes that Hillary Clinton "voted against the biggest trade bill of the new millennium—the Trade Act of 2002 . . . even though Bill [Clinton] sought a similar version of this 'fast track' legislation as president." She also voted against the trade pact with Central America (CAFTA).

One of the very few issues on which Clinton has earned demerits from the scorekeepers of the Left is the Iraq War. She voted to authorize the war and, unlike John Kerry, supported legislation to continue funding the troops. That record may anger the Bush-hating Left, but Clinton's rhetoric has been carefully calculated to

Democrats' weak reputation on defense issues, but "it's not off-putting to the Democratic base, which loathes Joe Lieberman-style militaristic posturing."

In fact, Senator Lieberman has earned the antipathy of the anti-war Left precisely because he is not merely posturing. Clinton's ersatz hawkishness, in comparison, is one of tepid gestures and hollow speechifying. And, skilled poseur that she is, she takes pains not to distance herself too far from the military's slanderers on the left. When Sen. Dick Durbin compared the American military's treatment of detainees at Guantanamo to "Nazis, Soviets in their gulags, or some mad regime—Pol Pot or others—that had no concern for human beings," Hillary Clinton was asked for a reaction to it. Conveniently, she hadn't read Durbin's speech—and when a reporter read the offensive bits to her, she simply declined to comment. Such suggestive evasiveness was also on display in last year's presidential campaign, when she said she hoped that uncommitted voters would be moved into the Democratic column by Michael Moore's *Fahrenheit 9/11*, although she hadn't seen it herself.

ENEMIES TO CONQUER

Senator Clinton is betting that the warring Democratic factions, after frustrating years out of power, can be unified in a fight against the force of darkness that is the Republican party. She set the lefty blogs buzzing when, at a July meeting of the Democratic Leadership Council, she called on the party to unite around the "values violated every day in Washington by the ideologues of the

Hillary Clinton has a long history of taking positions entirely at odds with the words she proclaims from the housetops.

give her an exit strategy from the political consequences. Explaining her vote authorizing the use of force, she said, "Bipartisan support for this resolution makes success in the United Nations more likely and, therefore, war less likely." Come the Iowa caucuses, she'll be explaining that it wasn't a pro-war vote at all, but a pro-U.N. one. She now insists that she had hoped President Bush, backed by Congress, would force tougher inspections, but—alas!—he refused to let them continue. And she has derided the administration's war plans as "a combination of naïveté and incompetence."

By any reasonable standard, Hillary is no hawk. The conservative American Security Council gives her a measly 20 percent on national-security issues. She has voted to restrict a missile-defense system and to eliminate funding for a nuclear bunker-buster weapon. She may support increasing the size of the Army, but the legislation she has sponsored suggests an interest primarily in burnishing her security credentials on the cheap: She introduced a bill to recognize military service during the Cold War, and is cosponsoring a resolution to provide airborne troops with a day in their honor. Liberals compare her with true hawks and acknowledge happily that she is not one of them. *The Nation* writes that her work on the Armed Services Committee and "mastering military arcana" is smart politics for an ambitious liberal aware of

Republican Right." Her modus operandi has always been to rally troops against the enemy—whether the Clintons' "Arkansas enemies," the Gingrich forces in the House, Ken Starr and "the vast right-wing conspiracy," George W. Bush and his band of ideologues, or whoever will bear the Republican mantle in 2008.

On the stump, Clinton seethes like Howard Dean. "Right now we have a White House and a majority in Congress who are systematically weakening the democratic traditions and institutions on which this nation was built. They are turning back the clock . . . on the 20th century . . . beyond Franklin Roosevelt, even beyond Teddy Roosevelt." And, "There has never been an administration, I don't believe in our history, more intent upon consolidating and abusing power to further their own agenda. . . . It's very hard to stop people who have no shame about what they're doing. . . . It is very hard to stop people who have never been acquainted with the truth."

Her husband wasn't as comfortable launching such strident partisan broadsides. Bill Clinton really did want us all to just get along. Hillary wants more: She would see her enemies vanquished. In the Clinton political partnership, the missus has always been the enforcer, the holder of grudges, the one who rides into battle when her husband lacks the stomach for it. In a huge 1994 *New Yorker* profile of Hillary, chockfull of unflattering tales about

the then First Lady, someone who had known the Clintons for many years explained, "Bill Clinton, calculating as he is, genuinely cares about people—he loves everyone, he is a sucker for every individual. Hillary, no. It's an intellectual thing—she loves the many, not the individual."

Unfortunately for the senator, this difference is observable even from afar. Bill Clinton is utterly comfortable in his own skin, an invaluable attribute he shares with Ronald Reagan and George W. Bush. Hillary Clinton, on the other hand, has been constantly remaking herself ever since her husband lost his governorship in 1980. That was when she changed her name, her appearance, and her public behavior to be more pleasing to Arkansas voters. She projects a manufactured personality and an air of moral superiority. If Bill is open and genuinely charismatic, Hillary is tightly controlled, with a hint of something—resentment? rage?—seething just beneath the surface. A staple of Hillary profiles is the assertion that she has a terrific sense of humor. But if, behind closed doors, Hillaryland is all laughs all the time, shouldn't a glimmer of spontaneous good humor have been glimpsed during Hillary's 15 years in the national spotlight? Miles of videotape have failed to capture even a single natural laugh.

Democrats fervently hope for a repeat Clinton White House, but Hillary will enjoy none of the advantages Bill did. In 1992, Bill introduced himself on the national stage as a moderate southern governor. The Cold War was over and national security was not among voters' top concerns. There was a recession; conservatives were disaffected with President Bush; and Ross Perot appeared on the scene, allowing Bill Clinton to be elected with just a 43 percent plurality.

Hillary, by contrast, is not a fresh political personality. Polls show that only 7 percent of the public has no opinion of her. A leading Republican strategist says, "I can't think of anyone who would rally conservatives more than Hillary Clinton. She would give the Republican nominee a jump on energizing the base." Moreover, most of the Democratic Leadership Council's political strategists argue against nominating a liberal from the Northeast. Will Marshall, head of the DLC policy working group, has cautioned against "getting in bed with the secular absolutists of the ACLU." Senator Clinton is precisely that: Last year, the ACLU gave her a rating that tied her with Chuck Schumer and put her ahead of Barbara Boxer.

Clinton's boosters and their Greek chorus in the press think she is an electoral powerhouse. But her history in actual elections—short though it is—does not bear that claim out. In her 2000 Senate campaign, she spent \$41 million to win 55 percent of the vote in one of the bluest of states. When her predecessor, the late Daniel Patrick Moynihan, was reelected in 1994—an exceptionally good year for Republicans—he won the same 55 percent of the vote and spent only \$6.7 million. When Al Gore ran for president, his share of New York voters was five points higher—and his margin among New York women was twice Hillary's.

And Hillary has a history (pardon me: a living history). The *New York Observer* may say that she is "no longer encumbered with the image of the jilted wife who's willing to accept her husband's outrageous behavior," but that assertion is absurd. I'm just an amateur compared with the real Hillary-haters, and my file on her is two inches thick. It starts early: In high school, she was known as Sister Frigidaire. Nor has she become more likable with age. A supposedly fierce protector of her family's privacy, she invited Jesse Jackson to the White House for personal counsel the day before Bill fessed up to his affair with Monica. Predictably, Jackson held a press conference the next day. Even her explanation of the Lewinsky scandal smacked of political opportunism: "I think a lot of this is prejudice against our state. They wouldn't do this if we were from some other state."

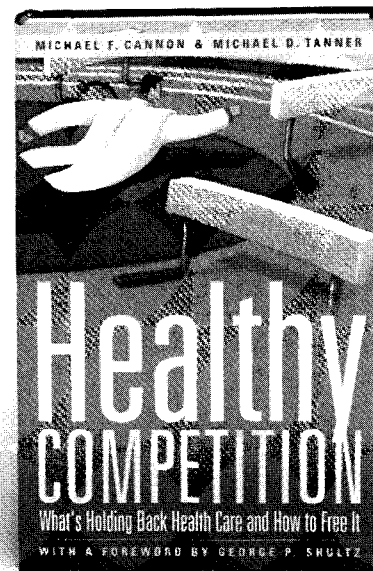
And we haven't even gotten started on Bill. In 1992, Hillary Clinton declared, "If you vote for my husband, you get me; it's a two-for-one blue-plate special." A President Hillary would put her husband back in the White House—with lots of time on his hands.

Even if voters don't think she is constitutionally barred from seeking another term as co-president, they are likely to see her for what she is: an aggressive, calculating, insincere, opportunistic, and exceptionally liberal woman. Her rhetoric, no matter how deft, cannot hide that character—and if Republicans underestimate her at their own peril, neither should she give them insomnia.

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— **Milton Friedman**



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A Taft Too Far

The Ohio GOP is in shambles—can Blackwell save it?

JOHN J. MILLER

OBSESSIVE concern for tennis schedules isn't usually regarded as one of Jimmy Carter's virtues, but a similar attention to detail might have saved the Ohio GOP a lot of grief: On August 18, Republican governor Bob Taft pleaded no contest to four misdemeanor counts of failing to report golf outings and a variety of other gifts on his financial-disclosure forms. He became Ohio's first sitting governor to be convicted of a criminal charge. There's now a chance he'll be stripped of his law license, just as Bill Clinton was following his admission of false testimony. Democrats in Columbus even began to mention that other word associated with Slick Willie—impeachment—but then realized that a scandal-plagued Taft is more useful to them than no Taft at all.

That's because Democrats finally stand a good chance of breaking the Republicans' lock on this swing state. Taft's indiscretions are a key reason for the Democrats' improved odds, but hardly the only one. More important is the Ohio GOP's bizarre determination to refashion itself as a party of higher taxes and bigger government. Since the Republican sweep of 1994, no Democrat has held any of Ohio's statewide offices. The GOP also dominates the legislature. Democrats have been so desperate to find candidates that they've even flirted with the idea of drafting talk-show buffoon Jerry Springer. Republicans, however, have used their period of uninterrupted rule to govern as anything but the fiscal conservatives most voters expect them to be. When they came to power, Ohio's tax burden ranked 24th among the states. Today, it has risen to 7th. At the same time, spending has grown faster in Ohio than in any other state.

In next year's race for governor, it will be difficult for Republicans to stick to the formula that has worked so well for them in recent years: slapping the label of tax-and-spend liberalism on Democrats. That will be especially true if they nominate yet another wobbly moderate for the state's top job. "The environment out here is not very good for Republicans," says David Hansen of the Buckeye Institute, a conservative think tank in Columbus. In next year's primary, however, there's a real possibility that GOP voters will chart a new course. Will their second thoughts come too late to make a difference?

THE NEW FLORIDA

Ohio is the new Florida. It was the site of intense politicking before last year's presidential election, as well as a phony vot-

ing controversy afterward. No state will have more political attention heaped upon it between now and 2008. Yet if the 2006 races go well for Democrats, Republicans could find themselves battling for Ohio in 2008 without the home-field advantage they've come to enjoy in recent years. A shift from red to blue in Ohio could prove deadly—it would have been enough to secure an Electoral College majority for John Kerry last November, and might provide the margin of victory next time as well.

An early sign of GOP trouble arrived on August 2, when Republican Jean Schmidt narrowly defeated Democrat Paul Hackett in a special election to replace Rep. Rob Portman, who joined the Bush administration as trade representative earlier this year. The Cincinnati-area district is solidly Republican, but Schmidt drew only 52 percent of the vote. Democrats in Washington celebrated Hackett's losing performance as a stunning rebuke of the president and a sign of greater things to come.

But this analysis is at best only half right. Greater things may yet come for Democrats, but Schmidt's narrow margin of victory was more about Taft than about Bush. A week before the election, one GOP-sponsored poll showed the president holding a 62 percent approval rating in the district. Hackett, a member of the Marine Reserves who saw combat in Iraq, criticized Bush but also ran ads of the president praising military veterans. If Hackett campaigned against anybody, it was Governor Taft. "We just tied everything to Taft," says Gabrielle Williamson, communications director of Ohio's Democratic party.

Expect to see much more of this next year. Taft may be America's least popular governor. His approval rating took a nosedive following his reelection in 2002 and his subsequent willingness to close a budget gap by hiking taxes. By last April, only 34 percent of Ohioans gave him a thumbs-up in a University of Cincinnati poll—the lowest figure for a sitting governor in more than two decades. And this was before the ethics violations became public. Since then, Taft's favorability rating has dropped to 15 percent, according to a recent Cleveland *Plain Dealer* survey. One in three people thinks he should resign—and that's just among Republicans.

Taft's position could erode further still. His conviction in August was part of a larger probe into the alleged mishandling of a workers' compensation fund. The state appears to have lost millions by making a curious investment in rare coins at the behest of a Taft golf partner and fundraiser, Thomas Noe, who also happens to be a rare-coin dealer. As the investigation grinds on, new revelations may lend credibility to what every message-disciplined Democrat in Ohio is now calling the GOP's "culture of corruption." In all likelihood, Democrats will nominate their strongest candidate for governor in years, either Columbus mayor Michael Coleman or Rep. Ted Strickland.

These developments have dispirited no group of voters more than Ohio's conservatives. Their frustration is exacerbated by Ohio's two GOP senators, Mike DeWine and George Voinovich, who have voted like liberals on Arctic oil drilling (opposed by DeWine) and gun control (favored by both). Democratic congressman Tim Ryan recently said he won't

challenge DeWine next year, even though an endorsement from the National Rifle Association may have been in the offing. "Ryan's record is perfect and DeWine's is perfectly awful," says one NRA source. Hackett, another possible contender against DeWine, lacks Ryan's voting record but took pro-gun positions during the recent special election. DeWine certainly looks vulnerable: In a SurveyUSA poll taken in August, 42 percent of Ohio voters approved of his job performance and 43 percent disapproved.

Voinovich was one of only three senators to have a higher negative rating (44 percent) than DeWine. He has made his mark in the Senate by being a constant headache for the Bush administration, repeatedly fighting tax cuts and last year becoming one of only two Republican senators to vote against a free-trade pact with Australia. More recently, in an act of baffling stubbornness, he almost single-handedly prevented John Bolton from winning Senate confirmation as ambassador to the United Nations, forcing Bush to give his nominee a recess appointment.

It's enough to make a conservative cry—and tears might very well be shed if Ohio Republicans nominate a gubernatorial candidate from their usual uninspiring mold. Two such candidates are state auditor Betty Montgomery and attorney general Jim Petro, both running hard to take over where Taft presumably will leave off. Conservatives should not feel reassured about either one. Montgomery is widely liked and has run well in several statewide contests, but she's also an abortion-rights advocate who wins plaudits from NARAL. Petro once stood in NARAL's good graces as well—the group backed him for election in 1998—but he has since renounced his pro-choice loyalties. He has not experienced an across-the-board conversion to conservatism, however: Last year, he opposed a state constitutional amendment that banned gay marriage. (His opposition was shared by Taft, DeWine, and Voinovich, but not Montgomery, who tepidly supported the measure.)

Sixty-two percent of Ohioans—and nearly three in four Ohio Republicans—supported the amendment, and its presence on the ballot arguably drove up the turnout of Evangelical voters, who helped put Bush over the top in Ohio. It never would have seen the light of day but for the efforts of Kenneth Blackwell, Ohio's secretary of state. He is the GOP's third candidate for governor—and the only genuine conservative in the field.

WISE BEAR

The 57-year-old Blackwell is a big bear of a man, standing six-foot-five and weighing about 250 pounds. "I used to have a lot less body fat," he says. Blackwell looks like he could be a retired football player, which he sort of is: He played for Xavier University and once attended training camp with the Dallas Cowboys. Sports runs deep in his family. His grandfather was in

baseball's Negro Leagues, and his great uncle, William DeHart Hubbard, was a track-and-field star who became the first black athlete to win an Olympic gold medal in an individual event (for the long jump, in 1924).

Blackwell, who wears glasses, a mustache, and is prone to bursts of hearty laughter, took up politics in the 1970s. He was elected to the Cincinnati city council and later became mayor. Although he won office as a member of a third party in Cincinnati, Blackwell joined the GOP in the early 1980s. He served as a housing undersecretary in the first Bush administration, lost a race for Congress in 1990, and was appointed Ohio's state treasurer in 1993. He won election to that office the next year, and was persuaded not to challenge Taft for the governorship in 1998. Instead, he ran successfully for secretary of state.

From that perch, however, he has wound up challenging Taft

again and again, especially on taxes. Most noteworthy, perhaps, was his opposition to a one-penny sales-tax increase that Taft accepted two years ago. At the time, Taft insisted that it would be a "temporary" increase. In the state's latest budget, however, half the increase was repealed and half was made permanent. Blackwell opposed both halves from the start, and even began a campaign to eliminate the hike by ballot initiative. "Too many Republicans campaign like Ronald Reagan and then govern like Dick Celeste," says Blackwell, referring to Ohio's last Democratic governor. "I couldn't let them get away with the biggest tax increase in the state's history."

For a variety of reasons, his initiative to repeal the sales-tax hike didn't make the ballot—but an even more ambitious proposal, a constitutional amendment to limit the growth of state government, will almost certainly go before voters

next year. "This issue is going to be the centerpiece of my gubernatorial campaign," says Blackwell. If approved, the Tax Expenditure Limitation would prevent Ohio's government from growing faster than 3.5 percent, or the combined rate of inflation and population growth, in any single year. Blackwell is not only the idea's prime mover, but also the only major officeholder in the state to support it. "Jim Petro is Taft-like and Betty Montgomery is Taft-lite," says Blackwell. "Neither one of them has seen a tax cut they could support or a tax increase they could reject."

Because of his stance on taxes and other issues, Blackwell currently leads his opponents for the GOP nomination. A Fred Steeper poll of Republican primary voters, paid for by Blackwell, showed 36 percent of those polled supporting the secretary of state, compared with 21 percent for Montgomery and 20 percent for Petro. The other candidates have seen similar numbers in their own research, but counter that Blackwell wouldn't perform well in a general election. "He's far too conservative for Ohio's moderates," says a campaign aide for one



Kenneth Blackwell

of Blackwell's GOP rivals. There has been concern that Blackwell can't raise enough funds, especially among business leaders who traditionally support Republicans but fought last year's marriage amendment on the grounds that it might dissuade gays from taking jobs in the state. Although Blackwell trails both Montgomery and Petro in overall fundraising, he has raised more money than either of them so far this year.

He also promises to become a national spokesman for the conservative movement. The *Chicago Tribune* has called Blackwell "the anti-Obama," in reference to Democratic senator Barack Obama of Illinois, who is sensationally popular among liberals. Steve Forbes, Jack Kemp, and Phyllis Schlafly already support Blackwell. The Club for Growth, which has played a crucial role in several federal elections, may also weigh in for him. "Because Ohio is politically dysfunctional, and Ken Blackwell is such a compelling candidate, we are seriously considering making an exception to our policy of not getting involved in state races," says Club for Growth president Pat Toomey. Some of the Club's favorite politicians have also endorsed Blackwell, including former Democratic senator Zell Miller of Georgia and Republican governors Rick Perry of Texas and Mark Sanford of South Carolina.

Blackwell is clearly the nominee the Democrats fear most. If he weren't, the Ohio Democratic party would not recently have draped a "Stop Ken Blackwell!" banner across the top of its website. In the wake of George W. Bush's reelection, Democrats tried to demonize Blackwell for a supposed election scandal just as other Democrats had lambasted Florida's Katherine Harris four years earlier. But the attempt went nowhere—in part because the vote in Ohio wasn't nearly as close as it had been in Florida, but also because Blackwell couldn't plausibly be caricatured as an establishment yes man. Not only is he out of favor with the Taft crowd in Columbus, he also managed to irritate the Bush-Cheney campaign by refusing to certify Ralph Nader for the Ohio ballot—an act that almost certainly bolstered Kerry's chances on Election Day. "Nader wasn't on the ballot because he didn't deserve to be on the ballot," says Blackwell. "I wasn't going to bend the rules for anybody."

Although some liberals still cling to the fantasy that Ohio Republicans stole the election for Bush—New York University professor Mark Crispin Miller tries to make that case in his forthcoming book *Fooled Again*—they are concerned about Blackwell not because of what he did as secretary of state but because of what he might do if he captures the GOP nomination for governor. For one thing, he promises to fire up Ohio conservatives like no other candidate can. He also threatens the Democrats' own base. Among black voters, Blackwell consistently outperforms other Republicans. What's more, his presence on the GOP ticket may help explain, at least in part, why Bush did better among Ohio blacks than he did among blacks in other states last year. Blackwell probably won't win a majority of them next year, but he could bite deeply into a bloc the Democrats must carry overwhelmingly in order to win.

If Blackwell prevails, it will be one of the GOP's brightest accomplishments in 2006, no matter what else happens. The state party will rise from its sickbed, and the national party may begin to wonder whether it should call him Mr. Governor—or think of him, possibly, as Mr. Vice President.

NR

■ EUROPE

Restoration

A journey into the new-old Poland

JOHN O'SULLIVAN

'RESTORATION" has not evoked warm feelings from conservatives in recent years. The term suggests a royalist sense of entitlement and a Tory sensibility. It reminds the literate that Henry Kissinger wrote a book praising the decidedly un-American Metternich under the title *A World Restored*. Kevin Phillips, seeking to delegitimize the Bush victory, called it a restoration. The usage did not outlast 9/11, but it was a shrewd thrust: Most contemporary American conservatives see themselves in the pioneering terms of the New World, breaking new ground, establishing societies based on merit, and favoring innovation generally. They equate restoration with an unproductive nostalgia.

Once we transfer this attitude to the arts, however, it seems absurdly philistine. Even in direct political terms conservatism's success in the 1980s in the U.S. and Britain was in part the rediscovery of traditions of enterprise and patriotism that had been derided only a few years before. And when it comes to the permanent things, Russell Kirk is there to remind us that tradition is their carrier even in such preeminently modern nations as the U.S.

If that is so, how much more true must it be of countries in Central and Eastern Europe that had their traditions uprooted by half a century of totalitarianism. Innovation there was almost purely destructive. To the degree that they could, Nazism and Communism made their subject nations physical and moral wastelands. Poland suffered more than most—but it managed to preserve its moral character and national traditions largely because the Catholic Church, too powerful to suppress entirely, acted as their guardian. Now Poland is free to restore its distinctive civilization in freedom—and the process of restoration is visible on every hand.

THE SURVIVAL

Cracow is one of the most beautiful of European cities. Its superb central square is the equal of the great squares of Brussels and Madrid. It is also one of the most learned of cities—hosting about a dozen universities—and an unusually devout one. It is the city of which Karol Wojtyla was archbishop; his picture is everywhere.

Cracow benefited from one good aspect of Polish Communism. In 1945 the country was literally in ruins; Communist governments restored the historic areas of some cities exactly as they had been before the conflict. Also, there was what one might call inadvertent restoration in those years—the Communist economy was so inert that there was simply less development than in the West. More of the past therefore survived in the form of bricks

and mortar—especially bricks, since in the north of Poland the lack of suitable stone produced beautiful redbrick Gothic churches and town halls.

Though the buildings were restored, however, the spirit that should inhabit them was not. Communist society was extremely gloomy; even happiness had to be officially organized. But in the 15 years since Communism collapsed, social and commercial life has flourished: There are excellent restaurants, art galleries, and bookshops. A Polish tradition of hospitality and entertaining (you are never allowed to buy a meal in their town) has revived. A civilization is being restored before one's eyes.

This weekend the city is full of tourists—but tourists of a special kind. The Pope's close adviser is due to be consecrated as archbishop. Hundreds of thousands of people will attend the televised ceremony. Alas, neither Christopher DeMuth, president of the American Enterprise Institute, nor I will be among them. We arrived in Cracow (on our way to the 25th anniversary celebrations of Solidarity in Gdansk) too late to get good seats. Our consolation prize is a visit to the salt mines.

The Wieliczka salt mine outside Cracow is one of the wonders of the world. Mining there probably goes back to Neolithic times. The tourist route, though only 3 percent of the mine, takes in among other attractions a ballroom (plus chandeliers), a blue lagoon, a cathedral hollowed out of the salt, and salt statues of King Casimir the Great, the Virgin Mary, and John Paul II. Walking through the mine is an extraordinary experience—the temperature is always the same, pleasantly cool, and the air very fresh. It has been a successful tourist attraction since the 1890s. (The ballroom is available for parties.) The salt mines were for centuries the basis of Cracow's civilization. Salt was the gold of Mitteleuropa in the Middle Ages. It enabled the city to develop the ancient university and superb architecture that now make it a place of pilgrimage and tourism.

Back in Cracow, I ask a young lawyer whose practice takes him to the U.S. fairly regularly whether Poland will remain as Catholic as in the recent past, or drift into a more "normal" European post-religious mood. He thinks that John Paul was personally responsible for the high commitment of Polish Catholics. Their devotion is never likely to sink to French or Italian levels of casual apostasy, but he feels it will gradually become less fervent and less politically important as the memory of the Pope itself fades.

Not everyone shares this view, I will discover; but it is not uncommon.

CONSERVATIVE RESURGENCE

Radek Sikorski, NATIONAL REVIEW's sometime roving correspondent and deputy foreign minister in a previous Polish government, drives Chris and me to his home in Chobielin. Fifteen

years ago he bought it as a ruin. His book *The Polish House* describes how he and his parents gradually restored it as a traditional Polish country home, enormously elegant yet very comfortable. As we drive there, he comments on the sad state of the roads: "Building infrastructure of this kind should be lesson number one for a centrally planned Communist economy, but they neglected these necessary projects in favor of their ideological plans."

Those plans included new housing estates without churches for the workers. I was reminded of the remark made to me by a Hungarian taxi driver who, as we sped past a vast Stalinist tower block in Budapest, said: "I sometimes think that the entire world Communist movement was just a front for the cement industry."

Incidentally, the workers insisted on having churches anyway. One bishop made himself hated by the Communist regime by leading his congregations to dig the foundations of new churches at forbidden sites in the dead of night, presenting the regime with new religious facts in the morning.

Radek is a candidate for the Polish senate in upcoming elections, in which the parties of the Right are heavily favored. The main focus of curiosity is on which of the two main conservative groups (the pro-business Citizens' Platform and the socially conservative Law and Justice party) will score higher, since their ranking will determine the share of cabinet posts—and thus determine whether the new government is more "liberal" or more "conservative" in its social policies and attitudes.

The Right's dominance is the result of a series of scandals in the present government. Underneath the usual election issues—18 percent unemployment is the biggest—these scandals have provoked a subterranean anxiety about Polish democracy.

Many people fear that power is exercised outside the formal political channels by shadowy networks linking the new rich, former intelligence networks, and the Russian intelligence services. They especially fear that these networks influence policy on energy—for which Poland relies heavily on Russia. And they sense that Polish politics will not be fully democratic until these networks and the scandals they foster have been purged from Polish life.

WHERE COMMUNISM CRUMBLLED

Worthies—Walesa, Havel, and many others—have assembled in Gdansk for the 25th anniversary of the recognition of Solidarity as the first free trade union in the Communist world. They all want to pay tribute to the Poles who began the unraveling of Communism that helped liberate their own nations.

Gdansk is more than an exercise in nostalgia. Radek Sikorski, for the New Atlantic Initiative, has arranged a conference on the day before the official celebrations. It is attended not only by veterans of the anti-Communist struggle but also by young people from today's freedom movements in the Middle East, Asia, and



Gdansk: more than an exercise in nostalgia

ELFI KLICK

elsewhere. These new dissidents report that their regions are moving toward more open and liberal societies—and that official U.S. government support is a big help. An especially significant moment occurs when a young Vietnamese woman asks whether the U.S. government would continue to press for democracy if it hoped to gain some benefit—bases, for instance—from an authoritarian government. The most senior U.S. official present, a senior figure on the National Security Council, gives a very honest reply. The U.S. government, he says, would sometimes appear inconsistent because it had many interests in world politics and, inevitably, these were often in conflict. When that happens, the freedom dissidents should hold America to its promises: It might push Washington to reach the right decision.

Later that evening, over dinner, the same official asks me where all the Western Europeans are. They above all should be listening to the testimony of these people struggling to be free. And he is right. Central and Eastern Europeans are present in large numbers; so are Americans; and there is a respectable number from Asia, Africa, and even Cuba. Except for a handful of government guests for the official celebration, however, the Western Europeans are conspicuous by their absence. A spiritual exhaustion seems to be gripping them. Since they feel they would have to do something about these evils if they knew about them, they decide that the best course is to avoid any such painful knowledge.

The British ambassador to Poland, an old friend from a NATIONAL REVIEW cruise, tells me that the two governments are to publish the record of Polish-British intelligence cooperation in World War II. Given that this cooperation included the stealing of the Germans' Enigma code-machine, it is no exaggeration to claim that the war might have been lost without it.

Outside my hotel, a small group of Ukrainians sings the national anthem and waves the blue and white flag whenever Ukraine's president, Viktor Yushchenko, appears. He walks over and talks to them. A diplomat watching the scene tells me the rumor that Yushchenko survived the poisoning attack because he is a keen beekeeper and, over the years, he had been stung so many times that he built up an immunity to the poison used.

The Poles generally give Yushchenko a warm welcome. They see him as an ally against a Russia using its energy supplies as a means of political pressure on its former satellites. And the latest news was that Russia and Germany had signed a deal to run a natural-gas pipeline through the Baltic rather than through Poland. "In other words," said a former Polish intelligence officer, "they want to be able to cut off energy to us without cutting it off to the Germans." This deal between Putin and Schroeder had aroused all the old fears that Poles have about Russo-German cooperation. It gave a sharp sense of topicality to the Solidarity celebrations. History never ends—and we should be prepared for future surprises.

EARLY WARNINGS

In Cracow again, I have lunch with the director of the Center for Political Studies. This was founded in 1992 as a think tank devoted to political philosophy and international relations. Among its scholarly projects has been an examination of early Polish critical studies of Communism, going back to the early 19th century. These have been collected in a remarkable volume:

Polish Anti-Communism and Its Intellectual Traditions: An Anthology. Given that some of the authors in this volume were writing before a single socialist regime existed anywhere, their prescience is astounding. They predict the evils of socialism and analyze their causes from every angle. One of the most startling, indeed eerie, contributions comes from Count Zygmunt Krasiński, a poet and novelist who lived mainly in France and Italy at a time when Poland was divided between Russia and Germany.

In "Poland Facing the Storm," he foresees the 20th century in the following Dostoevskyan terms: "There will be many who will doubt God, many who will doubt their own immortality, many who will doubt their nation and country, many who will doubt love, many who will doubt the harmony of human fate, many who will despair of virtue . . . and he who submits to the seduction of this brief fainting of the eternal conscience, will perpetrate crimes and violence, having proved to himself logically or mystically that the era of crime has come and that evil has changed places with good . . . Moreover, not only individuals, but also whole collections of individual spirits, entire cities and nations will go that way . . . Muscovy waits for Western civilization to disintegrate, it waits until Europe is weakened by civil strife, social fratricide, until the entire world, worn out by an immense loss of blood and an equally great dwindling of righteousness . . . until the world, as I say, calls it forth and surrenders to it . . . And then Muscovy, convinced that nothing will resist her, that all the prophecies of Peter the Great have been fulfilled, will start to plunder, in such a hideous and inhuman way that it will thrust Europe into ultimate despair. Only then will human thoughts begin to revert to the decent, to the virtuous, to the moderate, to the good. People will look all over the world for a good man—not self-righteous but righteous, not a false, cruel, ignoble liar and sycophant—who could be their savior. Yet even more desperately will they look for a nation that has retained its humanity amid the turmoil and insanity. Moreover, such a nation will become the consolation of Europe and humankind simply by having remained decent, by having preserved the germ of sacredness and divinity on the earth."

He means Poland, of course. And it is difficult to resist the thought that he was forecasting Solidarity, John Paul II, and the role of the Polish Catholic Church since 1945. Reading this over a glass of vodka in a pavement café surrounded by camera-laden tourists, I found I could make the prophecy disappear with the usual modern rationalizations—vague enough to describe innumerable events, the product of shrewd observation and a good grasp of history, lucky coincidences, etc., etc. If I were a Pole, however, especially one who had lived through the 50 years from 1939 to 1989, I don't think I would be able to reason it away so easily. The feeling would surely grip me, even against my will, that Krasiński had forecast Poland's providential role in modern history. I would see also that the prophecy is of a Poland restored—restored to full nationhood and liberty after almost 200 years of semi-life. How many Poles could fully rid themselves of this oddly substantial superstition? Not many, I think; which persuades me that Poles and Catholicism are in a lifelong marriage, one that will last even after the memory of John Paul the Great fades—even if, like most things Polish, the marriage is likely to be a stormy one.

NR

the long view

ROB LONG

MEMORANDUM

TO: ALL NEWS STAFF
FROM: MANAGEMENT
RE: DEPRESSION/GRIEF

As many of you know, there have been several disturbing instances of depression and depression-related events in the newsroom and in some of the other bureaus.

A reporter on the White House beat, unbeknownst to us, had been suffering severe depression since November 3, 2004, and recently ran amok in the interns' break room, doing great injury to himself and others. The apparent trigger of the event—President Bush's plummeting poll numbers seemed, for a moment, to be improving—was all the more troubling because, as everyone on the news staff knows, President Bush is a president struggling with illegitimacy, and his wholesale commitment to the far-right Christian wing of the Republican party is bringing his administration closer and closer to collapse each day. It truly is a matter of waiting it out. Running crazed among our college summer staff, and swinging a heavy computer keyboard, seems completely unnecessary.

If this were an isolated incident, we might be accused of overreacting. But the trouble doesn't end there. Our Iraq and Afghanistan correspondents are reporting increased levels of stress and stress-related disorders. Two have requested immediate medical leave, suffering from both acute depression and chronic fatigue in the wake of the recent successful elections in both of those countries. Several have found it difficult and extremely stressful to maintain the relentlessly negative perspective we all expect and that they naturally demand of themselves. As the Iraqi people begin the process of ratifying a new constitution, and as the sporadic and deadly insurgency sputters

along with intermittent and dwindling effectiveness, it's become difficult for all of us—news staff and management, here and abroad—to remember that the war in Iraq is a crucial must-win conflict for the news media. We may be tempted to throw in the towel, to pull out, as it were, and declare “victory” for the administration. But this news organization owes it to itself and to its readers and viewers to rededicate its efforts toward maintaining the aura of failure, hopelessness, near-chaos, and quagmire we've so bravely kept up for the past three years. As of this writing, two

BBC correspondents and an Agence France-Presse photographer have taken their own lives.

The best way to honor their memory is to keep searching for the tragic detail, the orphaned-boy-turned-terrorist, the rotten tree in the forest.

On another front, several reporters covering Hurricane Katrina and its aftermath have reported mental-health symptoms consistent with early heart-disease warnings as the death toll stubbornly remains below what is considered to be the “threshold” number of 1,000. As you all know, the recent events in the Gulf region of our country (see attached map) have been very useful for reminding our readers and viewers of their essential racism, and in identifying the Bush administration as ineffective and callous. We had all hoped—news staff and management alike—that the death toll would soar into the tens of thousands, or at least would eventually exceed that of the tragic Kyoto-protocol-related events of September 11. But strange as it is for a member of the “MSM”—as bloggers and Internet denizens insist on calling us—to say, perhaps we can take a page from the handbook of the Huffington Post, which manages, despite overwhelming odds, to maintain a crisp, dedicated, relentlessly negative drumbeat. Can “old media” learn from “new media”? You bet!



In light of these and other troubling patterns, it seems a good time to remind ourselves of certain facts:

1. Karl Rove remains a target of federal prosecutors, and could very likely be indicted and sent to prison. A front-page photo of his being escorted out of the White House in handcuffs is a very real possibility. We've allowed ourselves to be distracted from this crucial story by remote events in faraway lands (the Iraq constitution, Hurricane Katrina) but perhaps it's time to revive this developing narrative.

2. Cindy Sheehan, the proud, grieving mother of a slain American soldier, continues to maintain her silent, dignified vigil outside of the president's compound in Crawford, Tex. (News staff: please CHECK)

3. Statistically speaking, it's not inconceivable that the United States could suffer another massive terrorist attack on its soil, perhaps involving chemical or biological weapons, and resulting in massive loss of life, in the remaining years of the Bush administration. Obviously, such an event would be cataclysmic and multifaceted, but it's entirely possible that if such an event occurred before the 2006 midterm elections, the House and Senate might return to Democratic control. It might be useful for us to recommit ourselves to reminding all of our viewers and readers—not just the ones in this country, but also our large audience in the greater Muslim world—just where, exactly, America's defenses are the weakest, and where, precisely, a terrorist action would be most effective, and which ports and airports, specifically, might be the most porous. Again, we can only do what we can do. And keep our fingers crossed.

4. Homelessness continues to be a national disgrace. Let's put that back on the front page.

5. We still have much work to do on lesbian adoption.

Thank you all for your time and effort. We in management know that the past few years have been emotionally challenging. But together, we can get through this.

Courage!

MANAGEMENT

HELA

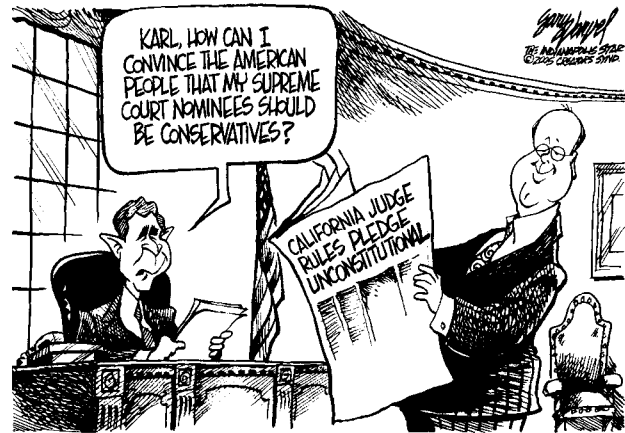
SEN. LANDRIEU'S WORLD

*Don't talk mean to her Cajuns
Or scandalize her gov;
Bad-mouth New Orleans's mayor and
Her stare becomes a shove.
Feds blaming parish locals
Ignite explosive rants
At Bush, his Bro, his Ma, his Pa,
His Cousins and his Aunts.*

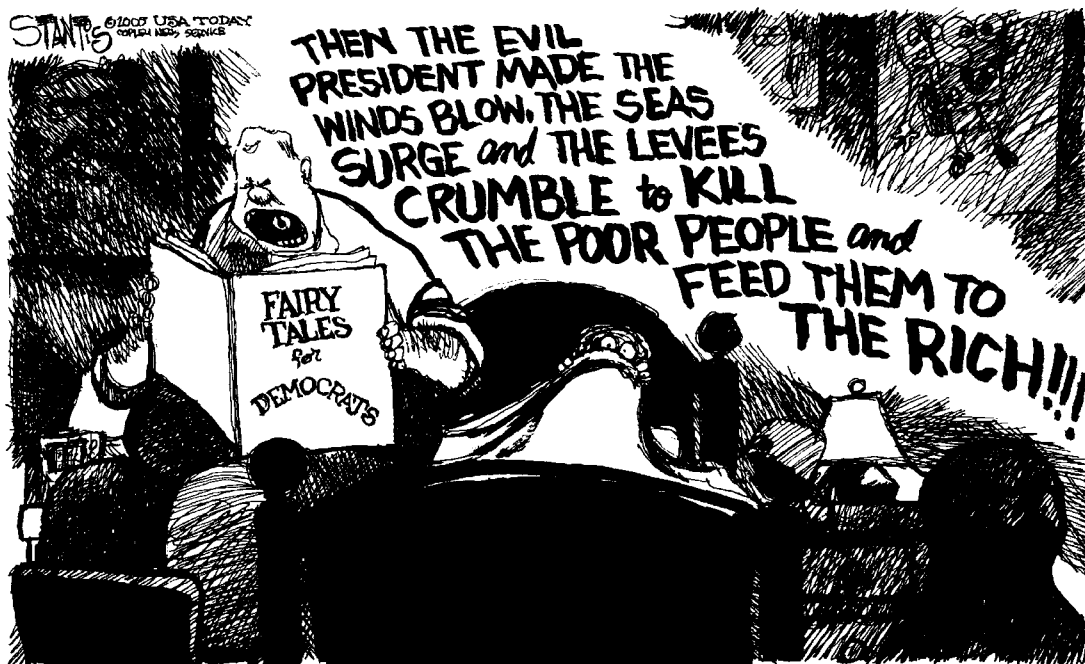
—W. H. VON DREELE



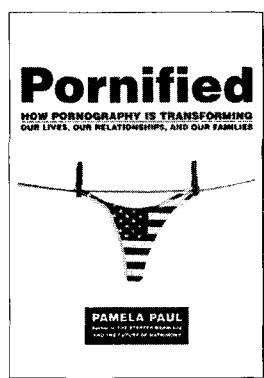
"What's your second choice in case it's extinct?"



"WHAT CONCERNS ME, JUDGE ROBERTS IS YOU DON'T READ THE CONSTITUTION AS I DO!"



Rated X



Pornified: How Pornography Is Transforming Our Lives, Our Relationships, and Our Families,
by Pamela Paul
(Times, 320 pp., \$25)

THOMAS S. HIBBS

COMMENTING on our contemporary sexual mores, the poet and agrarian essayist Wendell Berry has written that “in sex, as in other things, we have liberated fantasy but killed imagination, and so have sealed ourselves in selfishness and loneliness. Fantasy is of the solitary self, and it cannot lead us away from ourselves. It is by imagination that we cross over the differences between ourselves and other beings and thus learn compassion, forbearance, mercy, forgiveness, sympathy, and love.”

Berry’s observation dates back to the early 1990s, before the explosion of Internet pornography. The cultural impact of that explosion is explored in *Pornified*, by Pamela Paul, a journalist. Based on more than 100 interviews and a nationally representative poll of “pornography consumers,” Paul’s book never

Mr. Hibbs, the author of *Shows About Nothing*, is a contributor to National Review Online.

rises to Berry’s level of ethical insight, but it confirms Berry’s thesis as it describes in ample, if often repetitive, detail our “pornified culture.”

Paul stumbled into the Sadean world of Internet pornography while on assignment for *Time* magazine. Although she eventually addresses the legal issues surrounding the censorship of pornography, her focus is more on pornography’s cultural and psychological impact.

The narratives of “pornography consumers” are, with minor variations, tediously similar. A wife or girlfriend discovers—sometimes through the surprising appearance of obscene images on a computer screen—the heavy Internet-porn activity of her male partner. She objects and is rebuked as sexually frigid and closed-minded. At this point, she can back off and tolerate the man’s habits, rebuke him in turn, or join in. Some of the women who opt for the last path proclaim that their decision is in accord with sexual freedom but almost in the next breath confess to gnawing feelings of inferiority as they compare their own bodies to those of the eager sexual gymnasts the man finds so tantalizing. With or without the woman’s complicity, the man’s online activity often intensifies and focuses increasingly on, to put it delicately, taboo sexual practices. In one accidentally humorous case, the man’s interest in sex with his female partner gradually subsides and he begins perusing online sex shops for the purchase of a life-size doll. Confronted, he explains: “It has nothing to do with you. When you’re not available, I could use this.”

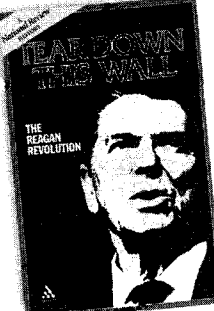
Although she did not initially intend it this way, Paul’s new book reads very much like a sequel to her first book, *The Starter Marriage and the Future of Matrimony*, for which she interviewed 60 couples from starter marriages, defined as childless marriages that last less than five years. In that book, she argued that engaged couples need more “realistic expectations” as to “what marriage can and cannot offer”; now, in *Pornified*, she notes that marriage counselors and divorce lawyers increasingly identify porn addiction as one of the contributing causes of marital splits.

Even apart from addiction, porn usage fosters false expectations about marital sex. The intensity of stimulation is difficult to parallel in the world of matrimonial sex. Porn, in which there is “no reciprocity” and “nothing veers from the automated path to pleasure,” is geared toward the “adolescent mind: simple, primal, hormone-driven, results-oriented, a winnable game.” Not exactly the best preparation for marital commitment and fidelity—and this is porn at its most mild.

The massive increase in the popularity of pornography in recent years is directly traceable to the ready availability of pornography on the Internet. Paul stresses the “intoxication effects of anonymity, accessibility, and affordability” of Internet porn, whose power of attraction frequently overwhelms the resistance of otherwise well-adjusted individuals. Americans spend more than \$4 billion a year on video porn, more than is spent on any professional sport. Half of hotel guests order “adult” entertainment. While mainstream Hollywood produces about 400 pictures a year, the porn industry cranks out 11,000 videos, most on a measly \$5,000-\$10,000 budget. The regularity of such images on the Internet is likely contributing to the steady demise in the longstanding taboo against pedophilia. From 1996 to 2004, the FBI witnessed a 23-fold increase in the number of child-porn cases.

Paul is not arguing that every adolescent who takes a peek at *Playboy* is on an inevitable path to the practice or even the viewing of sadomasochistic sex and bestiality. There is little evidence in her research of any direct correspondence between the viewing of taboo sexual activity and the practice of such activi-

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ties by viewers. There is, however, some evidence that exposure to pornography has a striking impact on how severely individuals view sexually violent crimes: Members of one studied group were inclined toward much lighter sentences for rape.

Ironically, the very thing that militates against imitative enactment—namely, the isolation of the Internet viewer and his sense of the unreality of the images he views—causes all sorts of other problems. The isolation of sexual acts from all human complications places a premium on intensely powerful visual stimulation. It is, to use Berry's language, about the fulfillment of the fantasies of isolated sexual consumers. Paul attributes some of the fascination with formerly marginal fetishes to the American spirit of "more, bigger, better." But she comes closer to the reason for the increase in her assertion that porn needs an "edge." Internet porn is, not surprisingly, subject to the laws of diminishing returns. A number of men testify to the need for greater stimulation, moving from sexual acts of a variety of sorts to an interest in sex with children, other men, or even animals. "To my surprise, I was curious," confesses one man.

Paul's book is repetitive, both in its empirical narratives and in its conclusions—yet there is a bracing freshness to her approach, the approach of someone who once assumed pornography was simply an innocuous and occasional entertainment for a minority of adults, but whose seasoned knowledge of the reality of the industry registers genuine horror. It may help her case that she brings no religious doctrines to bear upon the issue; indeed, she thinks that the attacks from religious groups on the porn industry have made it all too easy for the industry to label its opponents fanatical puritans. She thinks the Religious Right's campaign against sex education is counterproductive; sexual education is precisely what is needed to distinguish between healthy and

unhealthy conceptions of sexuality, she says.

Part of the rhetorical force of the porn industry is the way it has insinuated itself into the ideals of progressivism and the defense of civil liberties. To speak against it is to be "pornophobic" or to engage in sexual correctness. Of course, the way the pro-porn industry makes its case by foreclosing the very possibility of argument is itself an egregious example of political correctness. She rightly mocks the notion that these folks are motivated by the defense of free political discourse and stresses repeatedly that porn is an industry with big bucks on the line. The ACLU argues that requiring a credit card for access to porn sites to try to deter children from viewing them violates the Bill of Rights and constitutes

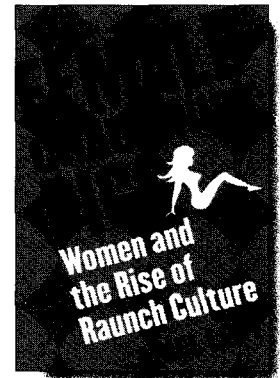
The porn industry has insinuated itself into the ideals of progressivism and the defense of civil liberties.

an undue burden on citizens. Although her emphasis is less on criminalization than on condemnation and public outrage, the author does suggest that pornography could be governed by the rules appropriate to commerce rather than to communication—much in the way guns and pharmaceuticals are regulated.

Reforming a pornified culture, Paul rightly observes, will require multiple strategies. One strategy she does not mention would take aim

at contemporary liberalism's values deficit with the American public. What does it say about the shrinking ambitions and declining seriousness of contemporary liberalism that Larry Flynt is lionized as a civil-rights leader? Paul's remarks about sex education might be turned to good effect as well, although she seems ignorant of how clinically abstract such an education is apt to be in today's public-school curriculum. Here we might return to Berry, and his observations concerning "the best representations" of sexual love as "surrounded and imbued with the light of imagination, so that they make one aware, with profound sympathy, of the two lives, not just the two bodies, that are involved." That's precisely the sort of education—found in great literature, art, and music—needed to combat a "pornified culture" and educate the passions and imagination of today's youth. **NR**

O Femina! O Mores!



*Female Chauvinist Pigs:
Women and the Rise of Raunch Culture,*
by Ariel Levy
(Free Press, 240 pp., \$25)

MYRNA BLYTH

I USED hot-pink post-it notes to mark the pages of this book; it seemed appropriate, since they matched so perfectly the book's hot-pink cover. The cover, in turn, is highly appropriate for the book's contents. Its author, *New York* magazine contributing editor Ariel Levy, has spent several years looking at today's young women—how they dress and behave, what they watch and whom they admire—and she is very, very perplexed.

It's not just that when she turns on the TV, she finds strippers in pasties giving advice on "how best to lap dance a man to orgasm"; or that when she walks down the street, she sees young women in jeans that expose their "butt-cleavage" topped with minuscule T-shirts emblazoned with Playboy-bunny logos. Of even more concern to Levy was her discovery that "people I know (female people) liked going to strip clubs (female strippers). It was sexy and fun, they

Myrna Blyth, former editor of *Ladies' Home Journal* and founding editor of *More*, is the author of *Spin Sisters: How the Women of the Media Sell Unhappiness—and Liberalism—to the Women of America*.

explained. It was liberating and rebellious. My best friend at college, who used to go to Take Back the Night marches on campus, had become captivated by porn stars."

Yikes! Yes, the daughters of mothers who burned their bras and picketed *Playboy* and staged a sit-in at *Ladies' Home Journal* to force the magazine to promote feminism have decided that they are now empowered enough to get Brazilian bikini waxes, adopt Pamela Anderson's dress sense, and indulge—wholeheartedly—in the frat party of popular culture.

Understandably, Levy has trouble making this all add up. What happened to second-wave pornography-hating feminism, in this post-feminist pornography-proliferating world? To find out, she explores the many byways of "raunch culture," including the making of *Girls Gone Wild* videos, in which young women on spring break appear eager to flash for the camera. These particular videos are now a huge business, allegedly worth \$100 million dollars to Joe Francis, its creator. She also attends an evening organized by CAKE, "a hyper-sexed sorority" that deftly mixes political action—they arranged for a bus to take women to Washington for the April 2004 pro-abortion march—with sex-toy parties.

Part of Levy's thesis is that young women today basically want to act about sex the way young men always have. Some of the women want to take this idea to its literal extreme. Levy spends a very long, distasteful chapter—which, like a number of other chapters, began its life as a *New York* magazine article—describing lesbians who are trying to turn themselves, through testosterone shots and double mastectomies, into young men.

The author does a very good take-down job on the women who are profiting from raunch culture. Notable among them are Christie Hefner, who has spent years defending her father's dozy *Playboy*, and trying to revive it; and the much-lauded Sheila Nevins, head of documentaries at HBO, known for her risky, cutting-edge taste. Levy describes how Nevins, who has won numerous honors, rips apart a woman who dares to question why she is producing *G-String Divas*, a late night soft-core docu-soap.

"Everyone has to bump and grind for what they want," Nevins, the Jewish Woman of Inspiration award-winner, replies with a snarl; she goes on to defend the strippers who star in her program by saying, "Their bodies are their instruments, and if I had a body like that I would play it like a Stradivarius." Nevins is using here a typical Female Chauvinist Pig strategy: Make anyone who questions or disagrees with you seem prudish and uncool.

Levy's heroines remain the feminists of the 1960s: women like Susan Brownmiller, Erica Jong, and Andrea Dworkin (indeed, Levy wrote very sympathetically about Dworkin after her recent death). She believes that the raunch trend has arisen because conflicts between the women's movement and the sexual revolution were left unresolved 30 years ago. She also thinks it's a way young women can thumb their noses at the grimly intense fervor of old-style feminists. "After all," she writes, "nobody wants to turn into their mothers."

Yet Levy touches only lightly on how the media and the marketing industry have also combined to turn feminism into a type of *Sex and the City* narcissism in which women feel most empowered when they are shopping. And she dwells too briefly on the effect of the media's fascination with the outrageous behavior of celebrities. (Think Paris Hilton.)

Most important of all, she leaves unexplored the idea that young women might benefit greatly from a societal endorsement of a sense of morality—and that acting as crudely as a very crude guy not only diminishes a woman's potential for real "feminist power," but also wreaks havoc on her self-respect. In her chapter on teenagers (titled "Pigs in Training"), Levy reports on the shocking behavior of a number of girls—including an eighth-grader at Horace Mann, an elite New York private school, who made a digital recording of herself masturbating and simulating fellatio on a Swiffer mop. Soon everyone at school had seen her performance. But did it shame her?

Not at all. Allegedly, she was walking around the school, giving out autographs. Levy also points out that today's young girls often compete to dress the "skankiest"; one girl says that "since seventh grade [when she was twelve], the skankier, the smaller, the most cleavage, the better . . . I wanted guys to want me, to want to hook up with me . . . I always wanted guys to think I was the hottest one."

Reading this, I wondered: Since twelve-year-olds are not able to purchase skanky Abercrombie & Fitch skirts, no wider than a belt, without the family credit card, what was her mother thinking? Why did she allow a twelve-year-old even to *try* to look "hot"? But Levy never even comments on—never mind criticizes—such a lack of involved parenting. She decides instead, in this very chapter, to let loose on the Bush administration's increase in funding for abstinence education. She ignores the fact that such education has, in recent years, seemed effective in reducing the rate of teenage pregnancy, and takes refuge in snide mockery. She recounts that she spent a day at a meeting of the New Jersey Coalition for Abstinence Education: "That night, I dreamed I got a rare form of lethal mouth cancer from a particularly passionate French kiss. I woke up

anxious and aroused." This is exactly the kind of Female Chauvinist Pig sneer she complains about when other women engage in it: a cheap way of dismissing attitudes with which one disagrees.

Levy's book offers very limited answers, but it asks some very interesting questions. And we can all be comforted to know that just as most women were not the angry rip-snorting feminists of the 1960s, most young women today—no matter how hard the media try to sell them on the notion—are not post-feminist bimbos. That's because for many young women today, sex and moral beliefs remain intertwined, a proposition Ariel Levy, unfortunately, does not seem to want to consider.

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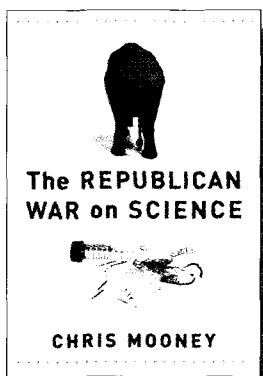
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A Vast Conspiracy?



The Republican War on Science,
by Chris Mooney
(Basic, 342 pp., \$24.95)

ADAM KEIPER

American military planners have long faced the challenge of preparing to fight several wars simultaneously. Maybe they could take some lessons from the Republican party, which, if we are to believe many liberal commentators, has been fighting dozens of simultaneous wars: A quick search through an online database finds newspaper references to continuing Republican wars against unions, the environment, women, the poor, the middle class, the New Deal, workers, young black men, judicial autonomy, and—my favorite—“Republicans” war against Republicans.”

Some of the Republican belligerence, according to liberal reporter-blogger Chris Mooney, is directed against science. As Mooney tells it, today’s Republican ascendancy was made possible by the merger of business interests and religious conservatives in the 1970s and 1980s. Now, on behalf of those two groups, the Republican party is attacking modern science. According to Mooney, the GOP—and especially the Bush administration—has been distorting scientific facts, gagging scientists, suppressing

Mr. Keiper is managing editor of *The New Atlantis*.

research, packing scientific advisory committees with ideologues, and in various other ways abusing and politicizing science.

The Left, of course, is guilty of its own long train of abuses of science, on subjects ranging from animal testing to nuclear energy to genetically modified food. Liberals regularly distort science to push their agenda—witness the recent efforts to link Hurricane Katrina to global warming, a totally unsupportable and offensively opportunistic claim. Mooney does mention, in a most cursory way, these abuses by the Left; but he argues that the GOP’s abuses are both more numerous and more pernicious.

In making this claim, he is following in the footsteps of the Union of Concerned Scientists, a liberal advocacy group that issued a report in February 2004 accusing the Bush administration of manipulating science. The report was accompanied by a statement signed by a bevy of Nobel laureates; Mooney gushes about the statement’s “distinguished roster” of signatories. He portrays the document as an organic expression of outrage. In late 2003, he writes, worried scientists “assembled to compare notes” and tried “to articulate precisely how the Bush administration had crossed a new line.” They “recognized the prevalence of science abuses across a wide variety of fields and disciplines.” And they issued a heartfelt critique.

One need not be a cynic to question this portrayal of pure and noble researchers coming together to warn against the abuse of science. It may be enough to follow the money, and see where these scientists stood before the Bush administration ever existed, let alone crossed any “new line.” During the 2000 election cycle, about three dozen of the letter’s prominent scientist-signers made political donations to Al Gore or other liberal candidates and organizations. Only three made donations to Republicans. An impartial observer could be forgiven for getting the impression of a largely liberal list of signatories, led by a core of dyed-in-the-wool Democratic scientists who were politically opposed to the Bush administration from the outset, all assembled by a liberal advocacy group trying to raise money in an election year. The fact that many scientists are liberal hardly

demonstrates that Republicans are anti-science.

As for Mooney’s specific complaints, they are a mixed bag. He raises some good questions about the independence of scientific advisory panels, and points out several genuinely embarrassing appointments and decisions made by the administration. He also rightly mocks a Republican senator who called man-made global warming “the greatest hoax ever perpetrated on the American people.” Occasionally, though, the author throws a tantrum. Consider his apoplectic response to a few modest comments President Bush’s reelection campaign made about climate change and scientific uncertainty. “Such flagrant misrepresentation,” Mooney writes, “goes far beyond mere dishonesty. It demonstrates a gross disregard for the welfare of the American public, whom Bush represents, and for the population of the entire globe, whose fate depends in large measure on the behavior of the American behemoth.”

This political temperament sometimes clouds Mooney’s journalistic judgment. For example, his attempt to depict the recent fights over obesity and sugar consumption as strictly partisan is unreasonable. He doesn’t mention that more than four dozen House Democrats joined the Republicans last year in voting to protect food companies from obesity-related lawsuits. Nor does he mention that the sugar industry, which he accuses of “brass-knuckles tactics” in challenging a report on obesity, has donated more money to Democrats than to Republicans in seven of the last eight election cycles.

The chapter on evolution and intelligent design provides some interesting historical background, but in the end Mooney fails to put the debate in its proper perspective. Conservatives are not politically unified in, and not especially motivated by, and in a great many cases simply annoyed at, the intelligent-design debate.

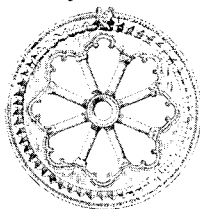
Mooney’s argument is at its weakest on stem-cell research. He wrongly claims that President Bush committed “one of the most flagrant purely scientific deceptions ever perpetrated by a U.S. president on an unsuspecting public” when he said, in his stem-cell address of August 2001, that “more than sixty genetically diverse stem-cell lines

already exist." In fact, the figure Bush cited was the best estimate to be had at the time, and while Mooney makes vague insinuations, neither he nor anyone else has offered any actual reason to think the number (provided to Bush by the National Institutes of Health after a global survey of stem-cell scientists) was manipulated.

More important, Mooney ignores the pro-science motivation of Bush's policy—far from arguing against stem-cell research, Bush insisted that means could be found to pursue it in ways that raised no ethical problems. His administration was the first to fund embryonic-stem-cell research, and his approach was one way of seeking to avert a collision between science and ethics. It has done just that. Spurred in large part by this policy, scientists have sought ways to derive embryonic stem cells without destroying human embryos, and major advances in this direction have been announced this year—vindicating Bush's view that American scientists had the ingenuity to get around the moral problem.

Mooney also falsely says that pro-lifers think embryos deserve "the same moral and legal protections as fully developed human beings." No one has made that argument; pro-lifers merely say embryos deserve the most minimal of all legal protections: protection from being intentionally killed. But more fundamentally, he seems utterly incapable of grasping the serious ethical qualms that conservatives have about some human biotechnologies.

He is right, however, to point out the sorry state of science journalism today. And he is right to call for the re-establishment of the Office of Technology Assessment (OTA), the congressional agency that Republicans abolished when they took over the House and Senate a decade ago. The agency was shut down for budgetary and political reasons that may have seemed sensible at the time; in retrospect, it was an improvident decision that left the legislative branch without its own, in-house source of scientific expertise. The rigorous analysis provided by a reconstituted OTA would improve congressional understanding of a great many policy areas where ignorance can be costly.



There is one passage in Mooney's book that is so misguided that it must not go unremarked. Although it takes us far afield from the nitty-gritty of politicized science, it reveals the depth of Mooney's misunderstanding of the Right. In attempting to explain the source of what he considers the Republican antipathy toward science, Mooney dips his toe into political philosophy—and almost drowns:

At its most basic level, the modern Right's tension with science springs from conservatism, a political philosophy that generally resists change. The dynamism of science—its constant onslaught on old orthodoxies, its rapid generation of new technological possibilities—presents an obvious challenge to more static worldviews. From Galileo to Darwin and beyond, this conflict has played out repeatedly over the course of history. Consider conservative thinker Edmund Burke's famous denunciation of the Enlightenment as an age of "sophisters, economists, and calculators" in his *Reflections on the Revolution in France*. Perhaps no line better captures the tension between conservatism as a political philosophy and the dynamism of scientific inquiry.

First, the quotation from Burke is not at all a denunciation of the Enlightenment. In context, Burke is lamenting the decline of chivalry and condemning the execution of Marie Antoinette. His target is the violent radicalism of the French Revolution, the "revolution in sentiments, manners, and moral opinions." No reader of Burke, moreover, could argue that he advocated a philosophy that "generally resists change."

Second, and more important, Mooney here confuses conservative philosophy with crude misoneism—hatred of novelty. Conservatives, especially in America, embrace modern science and enjoy the fruits of technological innovation. Conservatives on the whole are likely more friendly to technology than are liberals in America. But we also recognize the reality of human limits, and seek to promote human virtues and preserve human goods for generations to come. Science can bring us a better tomorrow only if we don't lose sight of what's best about today.

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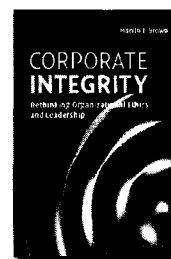
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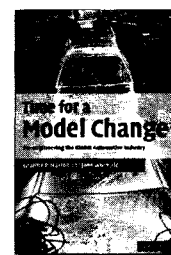
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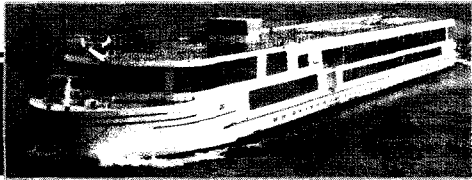
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DÜSSELDORF This major arts center, home to numerous theaters, museums, and the German Opera House, is also a shopper’s paradise (the Königsallee features many classy shops and pavement cafés). Our guided city tour will include a visit to Benrath Palace, with its stunning rococo interior and massive, beautiful gardens.

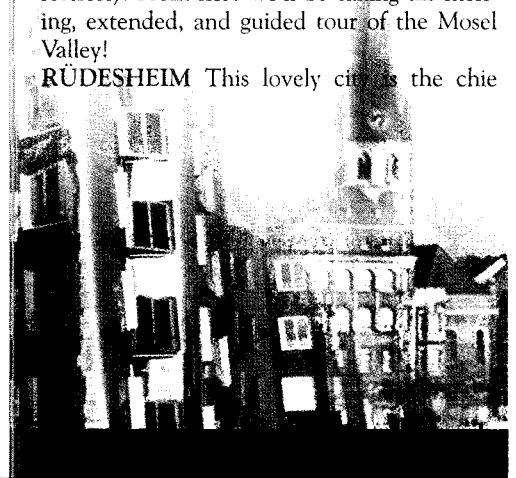
COLOGNE An intriguing mix of old and new, Cologne’s Roman heritage is evident from the city’s layout and many ancient ruins. Its modern plazas and the Hohe-Strasse, a pedestrian-only retail zone, provide ample shopping, lively bars and enticing restaurants. On our city tour, we’ll visit the city’s famous 14th century gothic Dom Cathedral (as well as a “Brauhaus” visit!).

KOBLENZ Capturing traditional German charm, this city of cobblestone streets, ancient market squares, and medieval churches is home to the Ehrenbreitstein (Europe’s oldest fortress). From here we’ll be taking an exciting, extended, and guided tour of the Mosel Valley!

RÜDESHEIM This lovely city is the chief

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Fri/May 5	Amsterdam			Keukenhof/Aalsmeer flower auction tour
Sat/May 6	Amsterdam		6:30pm	Afternoon panel session Evening cocktail reception
Sun/May 7	Düsseldorf	11:00am	(overnight)	Morning panel session City tour/Benrath Palace
Mon/May 8	Düsseldorf Cologne	9:00am	4:30am 10:00pm	City Walk/Cathedral and Brauhaus Tour Late-night Smoker
Tue/May 9	Koblenz	6:00am	2:00pm	Mosel Valley excursion Afternoon panel session Evening cocktail reception
	Rüdesheim	7:30pm	(overnight)	Late-evening wine tasting
Wed/May 10	Rüdesheim Mainz	8:30am	6:00am 12:00 noon	Gutenberg museum and City walking tour Heidelberg excursion
	Gernsheim Mannheim	2:30pm (drop off) 6:00pm	(overnight)	
Thur/May 11	Mannheim Strasbourg	2:00pm	2:00am (overnight)	Morning panel session City tour
				Late-night smoker
Fri/May 12	Strasbourg		1:00pm	Alsace/Vosges excursion Afternoon panel session Evening cocktail party
Sat/May 13	Basel	12:00 midnight (arrive)		



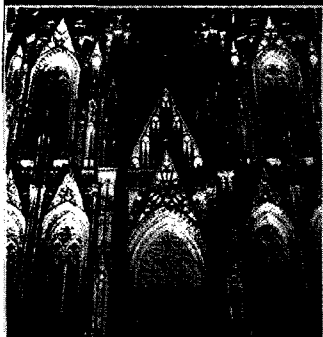
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center of the Rhine wine industry. Its famed Drosselgasse, a tavern-lined, cobblestone street, attracts locals and visitors alike. Half-timbered medieval houses, narrow streets, and old inns give the town the flavor of the Middle Ages.

MAINZ This ancient Roman city and important Middle Ages' trade center is

famous as the home to printing pioneer Johannes Gutenberg. NR's contingent will be visiting the Gutenberg Museum, as part of a City Walking tour. St. Stephen's Cathedral, which features Chagall's glorious stained-glass windows, is a must-see!

GERNSHEIM From this charming port we'll take an NR group tour to Heidelberg, famous for its esteemed university, charming Old Town, and awesome castle.

MANNHEIM Renowned for its classical "chessboard" layout dating from the 17th century, Mannheim—featuring many elegant shops, cafés, and restaurants—is a haven for culture and the arts. You'll find the baroque Mannheim Residence, with its ornamental stucco knights' hall, of special interest.

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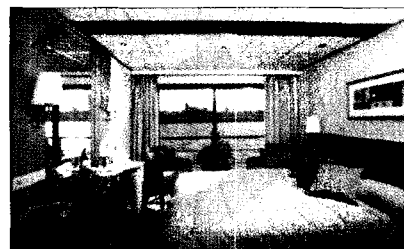
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Wits and Witches



MICHAEL POTE MRA

THE book of the season is also a Book of the Future. *The Complete New Yorker* (Random House, 123 pp., \$100), true to its name, is an eight-DVD set containing every page of every issue of the 80-year-old magazine. Virtually all of the physical weight of this gift box is accounted for by the accompanying book; the DVDs containing the actual reproduced magazines, all 4,109 issues, can be held easily in the palm of one's hand. The bittersweet victory over paper—tons and tons of paper, but lovable paper nonetheless—is in sight.

The most daunting question is, Where to start? The search engine is well-organized, by author and subject—so if you want to read, say, any of the 793 stories, essays, and poems written for *The New Yorker* by John Updike, they will be arranged chronologically for you; the only task remaining is to click the mouse, and occasionally change discs as the search takes you further into the magazine's past. And there are plenty of A-list authors to choose from, including Donald Barthelme, Jorge Luis Borges, John Cheever, Vladimir Nabokov, Cynthia Ozick, Dorothy Parker, and Isaac Bashevis Singer.

Another, equally pleasant strategy is the Cultural Immersion. Take an issue at random, from, say, 1960—and flip through it from cover to cover. Here, it's the ads, even more than the stuff that's listed in the table of contents, that will give you a snapshot of lived history. A poem or essay is created, at least in part, with an eye toward literary eternity; the

glossy ads are ephemeral by design. You want to know what people thought was really cool in 1960? You'll find the answer here: "Be popular / Be a Bourbonite / . . . make friends with Bellows Club Bourbon." "The flawless look for fall / DACRON® / Polyester fiber / . . . Slacks containing Dacron scoff at wrinkles . . ."

Conservatives will be delighted to find here such old friends as William F. Buckley Jr. and Richard Brookhiser. Just as delightful, though, are the political prophecies of liberals past. In his November 15, 1976, write-up of Jimmy Carter's election victory, Richard H. Rovere worried about the impending collapse of the GOP: "After Barry Goldwater's defeat in 1964, the Republican future looked bleak to most, and to some hopeless. But Goldwater was not as divisive a figure as Reagan . . . Today, the Republicans seem not only powerless but leaderless. . . . Reagan is not likely to try for the Presidency four years from now, when he will be sixty-nine . . . If those who adhere to this faith are really determined to take over what remains of the Republican Party, they can almost certainly do so . . . [but the result would be] to break an already enfeebled minority in two."

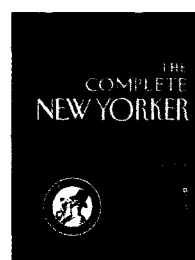
Delightful, yes, but sad as well: It reminds us that *all* human victory is evanescent. *The New Yorker* has done us a great service by making available this

compact yet aesthetically massive chronicle of the ups and downs, and literary achievements, of eight decades.

■ Why, more than two centuries after the Enlightenment, are hundreds of thousands of Americans turning to witchcraft and other forms of paganism? One easy answer, and not an entirely inaccurate one, can be found in Chesterton's principle that when people cease to believe in God they will believe in anything. But that's not all there is to it, as journalist Catherine Edwards Sanders explains in her insightful new book, *Wicca's Charm: Understanding the Spiritual Hunger Behind the Rise of Modern Witchcraft and Pagan Spirituality* (Shaw, 233 pp., \$13.99).

Growing interest in Wicca and other neo-pagan nature religions—especially among young women—is in substantial measure a reaction to specific failings in Christianity as it has been practiced.

The Biblical image of God as Father, for example, has been too often misunderstood as validating a social system in which men have a higher status than women; Wicca attracts people who want to repudiate, forcefully, any such view. (This external critique should prompt Christians to reconnect to the insight Paul expressed in Galatians 3:28: "There is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." If some passages in Scripture can be interpreted to support misogyny, this one can certainly



ROBERT LOWELL

I read with him at Hopkins, substituting
For Theodore Roethke, who was sick or drunk or dead;
No one could explain what I was doing there
With Wilbur and cracked Lowell on the stage,
Reciting poems about our animals.
Dick Wilbur turned to me and said: "I like your 'Turtle.'"
And I: "I like your 'Grasshopper,' or was it 'Groundhog?'"
Confusing him with Richard Eberhart,
Another Dick. But it was Lowell held
My attention in the rostrum's glare
As almost incoherently he read
Poems of personal agony and the State
Engraved in furious speech—our anti-Horace
Of the nuclear American Imperium.

—RICHARD O'CONNELL

be understood as a bold endorsement of the equal dignity of men and women.)

Catherine Sanders shows herself to be a patient and sensitive reporter as she tries, throughout the book, to get inside the skin of her interviewees. She also trains an astute eye on the big picture, noting that while many Westerners are seeking out neo-pagan religions that will help them reconnect to nature, "Christianity is growing rapidly in Third World countries that have been traditionally pagan. . . . They have realized that the land and nature around them will not save them even though their pagan religions have tried for millennia to appease nature." In the U.S., meanwhile, "we are wealthy and disconnected from the land, so we can romanticize that it is better and purer than we are. But we are much more sheltered from its fierce consequences." To read this in the aftermath of New Orleans is especially bracing; the reality of a Nature broken by man's fall is a truth even the wealthiest nation cannot escape forever.

Sanders writes from an explicitly Christian perspective, and gives Christians advice on how to deal with family members who are practicing these nature religions; but she writes with a level of openness and charity that is all too rare in this kind of literature. At a time when far too much non-fiction is devoted to hyping up panic on whatever threat is named in a particular book's title, her approach is refreshing.

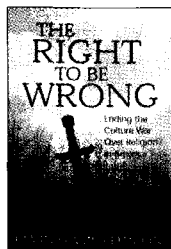
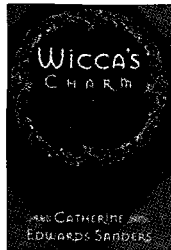
■ Kevin Seamus Hasson is founder and chairman of the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty, a public-interest law firm devoted to protecting the First Amendment right to free exercise of religion. In his new book, *The Right to Be Wrong: Ending the Culture War over Religion in America* (Encounter, 159 pp., \$25.95), Hasson gives an inspiring account of American pluralism, the historic "Third Way" between theocracy and government-mandated secularism: "[James] Madison insisted that from fundamental facts of human nature we derive rights that no government, even one acting through elected representatives, may justly transgress. Largely as a result, it is now a settled part of our national ethos that reli-

gious liberty is such a right." The free-exercise right is not to be left to the mercy of majoritarian whim.

This right exists in the natural order, but can be effectively protected only through well-defined civil institutions. Hasson writes engagingly about the dizzying complexity of recent legal wranglings over the First Amendment, and proposes a return to basic principles: "We are free to celebrate our beliefs in public and try respectfully to persuade others of them. . . . So, of course, are those with whom we disagree. And we can grant this point with complete integrity. We can each recognize the other's freedom without surrendering our own allegiance to the truth. We're free to insist that others are wrong for the same reason they're free to insist that we are. The truth is, we each have the right to be wrong."

■ *Auden and Christianity* (Yale, 207 pp., \$30), by University of Virginia professor emeritus Arthur Kirsch, is a helpful exposition of how a great poet's faith animated his work. "Art is not metaphysics," Auden once said, "and the artist is usually unwise to insist too directly in his art upon his beliefs; but without an adequate and conscious metaphysics in the background, art's imitation of life inevitably becomes, either a photostatic copy of the accidental details of life without pattern or significance, or a personal allegory of the artist's individual dementia, of interest primarily to the psychologist and the historian."

Kirsch details the Christian dimension of Auden's prose as well as his poetry. In one essay, Auden provides a broad—and striking—explanation of prayer: "To pray is to pay attention or, shall we say, to 'listen' to someone or something other than oneself. Whenever a man so concentrates his attention—be it on a landscape, or a poem or a geometrical problem or an idol or the True God—that he completely forgets his own ego and desires in listening to what the other has to say to him, he is praying." What this meant for himself Auden revealed in a late autobiographical poem: "He has never seen God, / but, once or twice, he believes / he has heard Him." **NR**



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JAY NORDLINGER

BIG-NAME musicians make big-time recordings, and they've been churning them out lately. We'll examine a few of them, starting with the biggest one of them all: Plácido Domingo's *Tristan und Isolde*.

But he's just the tenor, isn't he? Why is it Domingo's? Because when he is involved in something, it's his, period. I should also note that this recording is billed as kind of the last hurrah—not so much of Domingo as of opera recordings made in studios.

The market is glutted, as the standard repertory has been recorded many times over. And the costs are prohibitive—thanks largely to union unreasonableness. But some of us think the standard repertory should be recorded in every era, if at all swingable. Why?

Because in every era, there are singers worth recording, in the important roles. For example, you would want Olga Borodina's Carmen, wouldn't you? No one would have to throw away his Conchita Supervia (or Risë Stevens, or Maria Callas).

Plácido Domingo began singing a lot of Wagner in the 1980s, when he was in his middle or late forties—something like that. His age is one of the great mysteries in the music business. Sources official and un- are all over the map, but the consensus is that Domingo's about 65. For the last ten years or so, I've called him "the ageless Spaniard," and although that phrase is less true than it was even three years ago, it still more or less holds up. Domingo is a marvel of vocal longevity (particularly for a tenor). And to put a Tristan on CD crowns a career.

Domingo added something fairly new to Wagner singing: Here was a creamy lyric tenor—a Rodolfo (*La Bohème*), even

an Edgardo (*Lucia di Lammermoor*)—suddenly a Lohengrin, a Tannhäuser, a Siegmund (in *Die Walküre*). Sure, he had begun his career as a baritone—like his great Wagnerian predecessor Lauritz Melchior—but he was very much a tenor. And he brought the qualities of creamy lyricism, even of bel canto, to Wagner. Yes, he crooned a little bit (which ain't good)—but at least he didn't bark.

And although his German started out . . . rather Spanish, let's say, it improved to the point of respectability. In fact, his Spanishness may be more pronounced in his Italian, precisely because of the similarity between those two languages. (Spanish singers, in my experience, try less hard to conform.)

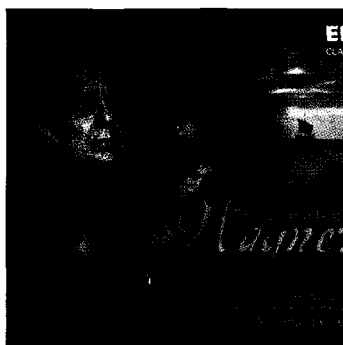
So Domingo climbed up the Wagnerian ladder all the way to Tristan, granddaddy of the tenor roles. It is one he has never performed onstage, and never will, but he can certainly handle it in the studio—with

all of its tricks—and EMI decided to record him. His Isolde is not Deborah Voigt, the soprano with whom he recorded some Wagner duets (including the great love duet from *Tristan*). (This recording is also on EMI.) It's Nina Stemme, a Swede who gained notoriety when she appeared stunningly

naked at Salzburg. Stemme is certainly a worthy Isolde, and a worthy Wagnerian all around. But I still would have voted for Voigt (who in any case has her own *Tristan und Isolde* out—with the conductor Christian Thielemann, on Deutsche Grammophon).

Domingo's conductor is Antonio Pappano, maestro of Covent Garden, and one of the best opera conductors in the world. One of the better symphonic conductors, as well. As for the cast below the title roles, EMI didn't skimp: The Young Seaman—a minor

part—is a virtual superstar, the Mexican tenor Rolando Villazón (a Domingo protégé). The Shepherd is Ian Bostridge. René Pape is King Mark, which is appropriate—or desirable—considering that he is the King Mark of our time.



Olaf Bär makes a solid Kurwenal.

The only surprising cast choice is the Japanese mezzo Mihoko Fujimura for Brangäne, and she fills the bill.

You will not get a thorough review here, but I will ask and answer an important question: Was it too late? Was it too late to capture Domingo in this great and demanding role? No, not really. He is recognizably himself, even if he's in autumn. He sings with his usual excellence, and also his usual mannerisms, but at least these aren't worsening with time. This is a valuable recording—not redundant, not wasteful. The sort of recording Domingo, and his public, deserve.

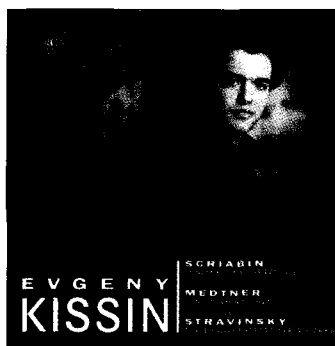
■ Evgeny Kissin, the Russian virtuoso, has put out a new album—of Russian virtuosic music. Well, not all of it is that way: The pianist begins with some early preludes of Scriabin, not very well known. These are miniatures, written before the composer had become the Scriabin we know. Kissin plays them with his customary self-possession.

He moves on to a sonata by Scriabin, but, again, an early and little-known one: No. 3 in F-sharp minor, Op. 23. As you can imagine, Kissin approaches the sonata with boldness, but he also does some of his trademark thumping. The second movement, Allegretto, doesn't have very much "etto" in it (although, to be sure, this is as much Scriabin's fault as Kissin's). And in the Andante, many of Kissin's phrases are far too big and blunt. But he conquers the final movement—Presto con fuoco—which is arresting, gripping, in the Russian tradition.

This is not Scriabin's best piece, but how nice of Kissin to resurrect it.

He also resurrects a piece by Nikolai Medtner, beloved by pianists in generations past. This is the *Sonata Reminiscenza*, part of the *Forgotten Melodies* (appropriately enough). Kissin loves to explore this old-fashioned liter-

ature, and this is why so many of us call him a "throwback" (which is no insult, believe me). Kissin thumps his way through some of the *Sonata Reminiscenza*, but he also shapes it well, which is fortunate, because it's a long, episodic,



unwieldy piece. Reminiscences often meander.

The disc—courtesy of RCA Red Seal—ends with Stravinsky's *Three Movements from Pétrouchka*. Of this, we can be sure: All the notes are there. But are they musical? Kissin tends to bludgeon the keyboard, and this performance could use more wit, scintillation, and flair. Nearly wrecking the final movement—"La Semaine grasse"—is that thumping, thudding quality. Luckily, the market is "glutted" with exemplary *Pétrouchkas*.

■ Return, now, to Debbie Voigt: Her latest album is of American song, exploring five different composers, one of them living. The album, from EMI, is called *All My Heart*, but ignore the dorky title: Record companies think that such titles sell. I suppose one should bow to their superior expertise, and experience.

Voigt is a big, splashy opera star, but she is also an effective recitalist, as you can hear on this album. In American song, she is clean, natural, direct, unaffected. One benefit is that she sings American songs in American English. But doesn't every American singer? You'd be surprised. (Incidentally, I once watched Debbie Voigt in a master class trying to get an American student—in a Barber song—to sing the syllables in an American, not a British or vaguely Continental, way.)

On this new album, she begins with a group of Charles Ives, replete with his strange rhythms, and strange sound combinations. Voigt's is a big voice—one of the biggest on the scene—but she scales down for these small songs. No mere diva, she can do whatever it takes, musically. She sings her Ives with clear understanding, and that includes a dose of humor.

She proceeds with three songs of Bernstein, one of which—if I may—is perhaps the most irksome I know: "So Pretty," the Vietnam protest song, words by Comden & Green, premiered by Barbra Streisand. The Americans, you see, were

killing all of those Vietnamese kids—who were "so pretty." No word on what Lenny, Betty, Adolph, and Barbra thought of the countless Vietnamese kids killed by Vietnamese Communists, especially after the war. Or maybe they weren't so pretty.

In addition to which, it's a dumb ditty, musically.

That living composer is Ben Moore, born in 1960, a generous eight of whose songs Voigt offers here. He is widely known for a parody song he wrote for this soprano—"Wagner Roles" (a hoot)—but these are true art songs. Moore uses an intelligent variety of texts, many of them musical: Joyce's *Chamber Music*, Elizabeth Bishop's "I Am in Need of Music." These

are, in general, pleasant songs—tuneful, semi-pop-like—sung pleasantly.

Voigt continues with a set by Charles Tomlinson Griffes, the American Impressionist. His songs tend to be beautiful, long-lined, and sort of aching—right up Voigt's alley. And she closes with three

songs by Amy Beach, known to the world as Mrs. H. H. A. Beach, until moderns thought she needed to be "Amy." There went one of the coolest names in music.

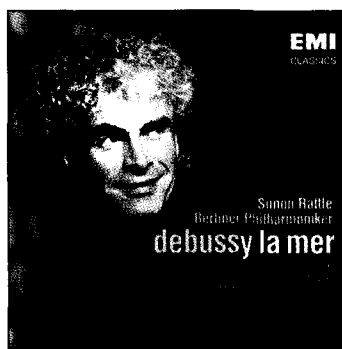
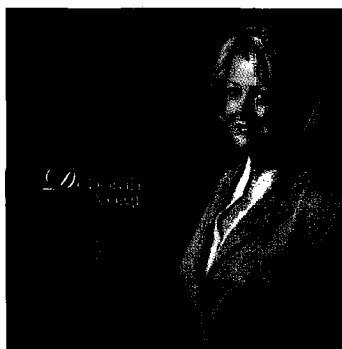
In the ancient tradition of mentioning the accompanist in the last line, I will say that Brian Zeger does his usual sen-

sitive and skillful job.

■ Sir Simon Rattle has just begun his fourth season as music director of the Berlin Philharmonic, and they are making a slew of recordings (for EMI). The latest of them is a Debussy disc, on which you get the expected: *La Mer* and the *Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun*. But you get the unexpected, too, namely a suite from *La Boîte à joujoux* (a ballet) and three piano preludes, orchestrated. The Berlin Philharmonic is a wonderful "French" orchestra, as any top orchestra would be: No music is foreign to an orchestra of quality. Sir Simon is a fair Debussyan, too, although his approach is sometimes a little too relaxed: *La Mer*,

for example, could use more tension, more of a push-and-pull—more drama (which is not verboten in Impressionism).

There is no weak section in the Berlin Philharmonic, but its woodwinds are particularly fine. Good thing, too, as Debussy, like his fellows, calls on woodwinds, a lot. Beginning the *Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun* is Emmanuel Pahud, the superstar flutist. (Rampal and Galway proved there could be such a thing.) That's not a bad start. **NR**



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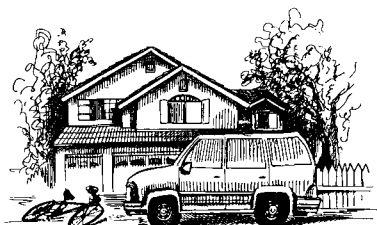
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The Same Old Story



JOHN DERBYSHIRE

If one examines the murders which have given the greatest amount of pleasure to the British public . . .

—George Orwell, *"Decline of the English Murder"* (1946)

THE conviction of Nancy Kissel, the "milkshake murderess," was briefly noticed in this magazine ("The Week," Sept. 26). Mrs. Kissel was the wife of a senior Merrill Lynch executive stationed in Hong Kong. She did the deed by feeding her husband a strawberry milkshake fortified with a date-rape drug, then, when he was unconscious, bludgeoning him to death with an art object made of lead. She proceeded to roll up Mr. Kissel in a carpet that she secured with tape and had taken away to a storage room. The Chinese workmen who carried the carpet complained that it smelled of salted fish. (I imagine they were thinking of the *mo-yu*, or inkfish, a South Chinese delicacy which does indeed have a powerfully putrid smell.) Mrs. Kissel claimed at trial that her husband had spied on her, threatened her with a baseball bat, patronized gay-porn websites, and demanded unorthodox sexual favors. All these allegations were declared by Mr. Kissel's relatives, acquaintances, and colleagues to be grossly out of character for the man they had known.

It emerged that while taking refuge at the family home in Vermont during the 2003 SARS epidemic, Mrs. Kissel had fallen into an affair with a cable repairman who lived in a nearby trailer park.

Passionate letters were exchanged after her return to the Far East. The fact that her husband's demise would bring her several million dollars was discussed. Her husband found out about the affair, was furious, and threatened divorce. Money! Sex! Class! "Hearts filled with passion, / Jealousy and hate"! This was one of your good old-fashioned domestic murders, perfect newspaper copy. I wish Mrs. Kissel had exercised a bit more ingenuity in disposing of the corpse. Hong Kong, however, is a very crowded place, and a human body is a difficult thing to hide even in more spacious surroundings. Mrs. Kissel did her best, I am sure.

Everybody loves a good murder story. We have been short of them recently, though. None of the big stories of the past few years has fitted the classic mold. Both the O. J. Simpson and Robert Blake trials ended in acquittal, depriving us of the satisfaction of seeing the fell deed actually, judicially, pinned on someone. (Though we may yet hope that O.J.'s unflagging efforts to identify the real killer of his wife will be crowned with success at last.) The Scott Peterson case was moved out of the realm of comprehensible, if extreme, human behavior by the fact that the victim was far gone in pregnancy. It is possible to feel some sympathy for Dr. Crippen or Mrs. Kissel, but no one of ordinary human emotions can identify with an amoral monster like Peterson.

I had early instruction in the ways of murderers and the mysteries they often engender. The house I grew up in was halfway along a street at the southern edge of a small English country town. If you walked to the end of the street and crossed over the London Road, you were in open countryside, among woods, fields, and hedgerows rolling away to East Anglia and the sea, interrupted only by Saxon villages little changed since they had been written up in the Domesday Book 900 years before. The nearest of these villages was Hardingstone, a standard-issue assemblage of pub, ancient church, thatched cottages, and manor house. ("vi sokemen and vi bordars have there iii ploughs . . ." —Domesday.) You got to this place via Hardingstone Lane, which meandered for half a mile or so under oak and chestnut trees, bordered by a moldering stone wall and a ditch.

Hardingstone Lane was the scene of a famous murder in 1930. From out of that ditch, at two o'clock of a November morning, Alfred Arthur Rouse popped up, to the surprise of two village men walking home from a dance in the town. "Looks as if someone's had a bonfire," said Rouse, referring to an unusual sight further along the lane: a blazing car, which the two villagers were contemplating with surprise. The car, it later transpired, was Rouse's. Entangled with several women and sinking into debt, Rouse had decided to disappear. Befriending a stranger in a pub, he heard the man say he had no close relatives, and furthermore needed a lift to a northern city. Rouse supplied the lift and a bottle of scotch. When the passenger had drunk himself into a stupor, Rouse throttled him, parked the car, and torched it, hoping that the charred corpse would be taken for his own. Perhaps it would have been if he'd had the sense to stay out of sight in that ditch. He got away from Hardingstone, but was caught within days, convicted after a six-day trial, and hanged a month later. Justice was brisk in those days.

Nobody ever knew the identity of Rouse's victim. There was, and I am sure still is, a marker for his grave in Hardingstone churchyard, a varnished wooden cross saying only, "In Memory of an Unknown Man." For decades afterwards—well into my own childhood—stories would crop up in the town newspaper, someone recollecting a relative or acquaintance who had vanished from the face of the earth in 1930.

"Vanished from the face of the earth"! How I used to thrill at that phrase, which I think I must have first heard in the context of the Rouse murder! It was what Rouse had hoped to do. It was what his anonymous victim had actually done, so far as those who knew him were concerned. I suppose some hundreds of persons vanish from the face of the earth every year, some deliberately, on the Rouse plan, some unwillingly, like his victim. Most of us have probably fantasized along these lines at one time or another. Some dismaying, but fortunately unguessable, proportion of us have contemplated, at least fleetingly, doing to a spouse the thing that Mrs. Kissel did to Mr. Kissel. Here are our own darkest midnight thoughts made real. No wonder murders bring us so much pleasure. **NR**

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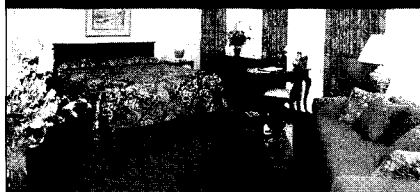
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WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY JR.

Fighting Back

NEW YORK, SEPTEMBER 6

A joke I laughed at 50 years ago features a man who at the end of the first race was up \$200. At the end of the fifth race, up \$20,000. At the end of the eighth, he is—wiped out. He makes his disconsolate, infuriated way to the parking lot and passes by a stranger who is bent over, fastening a shoelace. The hapless bettor aims a furious roundhouse kick, sprawling his victim on the ground. “Whaddaya do that for?” the shocked stranger says angrily.

He is answered, “You’re always tying your shoelace!”

A lead columnist in the *New York Times* explains the real meaning of the Katrina catastrophe.

Poverty.

Nicholas Kristof tells us that the infant mortality rate in America’s capital is twice as high as in China’s capital. “Under Mr. Bush, the national infant mortality rate has risen for the first time since 1958. The U.S. ranks 43rd in the world in infant mortality. So”—Reader:

brace yourself—“in some ways the poor children evacuated from New Orleans are the lucky ones because they may now get checkups and vaccinations.”

The social diagnostician gets right to the meat of what Mr. Bush did to generate the horrors of New Orleans. The Bush administration “has systematically cut people out of the social fabric by redistributing wealth from the most vulnerable Americans to the most affluent. It’s not just that funds may have gone to Iraq rather than to the levees in New Orleans; it’s also that money went to tax cuts for the wealthiest rather than vaccinations for children.”

That diagnosis is so drenched in balderdash it almost defies analysis. Let it rest that gross spending under Bush, and excluding Iraq, is the highest in U.S. history. And if New Orleans was short of vaccinations, why didn’t the Democratic mayor, congressmen, and

governor complain about it?

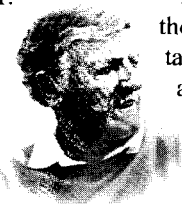
If we are looking for economic causes for the disastrous life in New Orleans, how do we account for the survival of life there? Over past decades, black Americans searching for better economic prospects traveled by the millions away from the deep South. Why was the emigration rate from New Orleans, if life there was so unrewarding, so low?

Or, starting at the other end, why wasn’t the invitation to leave New Orleans welcomed, when finally it came, prompted by the devastation of a hurricane? True, there were those who refused to leave because they could not make their way out of their quarters, however dolorous. Some of these, grandmothers and grandfathers, hadn’t left town in the preceding decades, before even the tax laws had changed: Why did they refuse to move now?

Our indomitably energetic society feels a need to come up with an explanation for that for which there is no ready explanation. That impulse has thus far satisfied itself mostly by kicking President Bush to the ground for stopping to tie his shoelace.

No doubt Mr. Bush could have thought of means more quickly to take center stage as dispenser of life and hope. Whatever the initial delays, the unused helicopter, the beached destroyer, the bus without gas, the U.S. is sweating its way to cope as best we can

with perhaps the worst natural catastrophe in our history. A week after it struck, 38,000 National Guard members from 42 states were mobilized, 21 U.S. Navy ships were providing support, 4,000 U.S. Coast Guard, 374 helicopters, 15,000 Search and Rescue personnel, 5,000 tons of supplies distributed, 75,000 people evacuated, 78,000 gallons of fuel brought over water, two critical levees repaired—and on and on, not coterminal with the pain and suffering undergone, but a long tale of response by a grieving nation that cares deeply. It is chronicled on the Defense Department’s website. And even that repository does not list the prayers that have been said.



Post-Katrina Doublethought

NEW YORK, SEPTEMBER 9

THE war against stable thought blazes on, the objective being to put the blame on the Bush administration for what happened in New Orleans.

Thomas Friedman of the *New York Times* personalizes even further. The administration has a “tax policy . . . dominated by the toweringly selfish Grover Norquist—who has been quoted as saying: ‘I don’t want to abolish government. I simply want to reduce it to the size where I can drag it into the bathroom and drown it in the bathtub.’” You would think that Mr. Friedman would leave a little place in life for hyperbole—what would he do with the political poets who speak of the “end” of hunger and disease? But he hangs onto the metaphor: “Mr. Norquist is the only person about whom I would say this: I hope he owns property around the New Orleans levee that was never properly finished because of a lack of tax dollars. I hope his basement got flooded.” Planted axiom: The unrepaired levee in New Orleans is the result of a shortage of federal dollars.

Across that editorial page we have the argument placed a little differently. Not that Maureen Dowd will neglect an opportunity to anthropomorphize Katrina. No, she explains, the tragedy was the result of the Bush political family, Dick Cheney being the next in line. What was he doing when Katrina struck? He was “reportedly . . . shopping for a \$2.9 million waterfront estate in St. Michael’s,” which is a “retreat in the Chesapeake Bay where Rummy has a weekend home.”

“As the water recedes,” Dowd explains, “more and more decaying bodies will testify to the callous and stumblebum administration response to Katrina’s rout of 90,000 square miles of the South.” Another planted axiom. It is that the Bush administration “has engaged in a tax giveaway since 9/11 that has had one underlying assumption: There will never be another rainy day.”

The gravamen against Bush becomes plain: The Bush administration insisted “on cutting more taxes, even when that

has contributed to incomplete levees and too small an army to deal with Katrina, Osama, and Saddam at the same time."

The proposition that the federal government under Bush has been short-changing welfare is in astonishing conflict with the figures. Under Bush, federal spending increases have been at the fastest rate in 30 years. Non-defense discretionary spending has grown by 35.7 percent, the highest rate of growth since the presidencies of Nixon and Johnson.

Again, the planted axiom is that the levee has been for years a national pustule that Bush refused to lance because he didn't want to drain the money needed by Cheney to buy his waterfront estate. If New Orleans was conspicuous for its vulnerability, why hadn't the city's articulate mayor, or his fellow Democrat the articulate governor, said something about it?

It is tempting to weigh directly the cost of repairing the levee, and the size of the tax cuts. But what is going to pay for all the ounces of prevention we could contingently use on all the frontiers of national vulnerability? The first-level threat to America is a nuclear bomb, then biological and chemical weapons. What preemptive precautions should be taken against the development of such weaponry? What Republicans are objecting to federal expenses on those fronts?

It diminishes confidence in purposive thought to lose oneself in polemical theater. Grover Norquist uses his own language. But he could be using that of John Adams, who warned that the government seeks to turn every contingency into an excuse for amassing power in itself. Or that of Woodrow Wilson, who said that the history of liberalism is the history of man's efforts to restrain the growth of government. If New Orleans is a land doomed by nature, then nature's reach needs to be tamed, or else yielded to. The critics have not yet charged that movement away from New Orleans was prohibited by George Bush.

Is Bush a Racist?

NEW YORK, SEPTEMBER 13

CRITICS of Mr. Bush may by their excesses be undermining not him, but the weight of sound thought. The most

clearly vulnerable line of attack has to do with vacation time—taken as an absolute indicator of fidelity to duty. "George W. Bush, the least hardworking president in history, continued playing at his Texas ranch while his fellow citizens drowned and starved in New Orleans." This from *The Week* magazine in London, quoting Philippe Grangereau in Paris's *Libération*. He has just discovered that *the reason* Rome burned was that Nero fiddled.

At a more ambitious level of criticism is Howard Jacobson in the London *Independent*. It was as easy for him as to look at the face of Bush on television. "No light of humanity in the eyes. No gravitas on the face."

It's true that Bush's face hasn't the melancholic cast of Abraham Lincoln's, but it was a large leap to assume from dark juxtapositions, intended irony. But Annette Lévy-Willard tried it in *Libération*. Her point is that television news directors undertook to expose the hypocrisy of Mr. Bush and his administration through the use of a split screen: "On one side, an administration official saying everything was fine; on the other, images of old people and the poor clinging to rooftops, dying of thirst." You can't really expect an official talking to a television reporter about the help that's on its way simultaneously to be feeding people "clinging to rooftops."

But there are serious critics who say that the basic question has to do with racial disparities. *USA Today* features a poll on this question. Asked whether the president "cares about black people," 67 percent of whites said yes, 79 percent of blacks said no. A broader question was put in a poll by the *Washington Post*, which recorded that nearly two-thirds of black respondents said that race played a part in the government's response while just over two-thirds of whites said that wasn't the case.

The beginning of wisdom in accosting that question is: Do you believe it? Do you believe that a helicopter looking for people in desperation would give preferred treatment to someone whose hands flailed for help because those hands were white, not black? No doubt that consanguinity plays a role in human affinities (that's why *Ebony* magazine features black models), but it is blasphemous to suppose that organized official aid discriminated in New Orleans against blacks.

If the sequence were parsed in a particular way, such a conclusion would be encouraged, but not warranted. A. The poorer sections of town were the least accessible. B. The poorer sections of town were the most densely inhabited by blacks. C. Therefore, blacks received the least aid.—That sequence, posing as a syllogism, is fraudulent if made to add up to racial prejudice. But what isn't denied is the existence of racist perceptions, as shown in the *Washington Post* poll.

The most direct transcription of such prejudice came with the O. J. Simpson trial. When 75 percent of black Americans believe that the answer is A, not B, and 75 percent of white Americans believe that the answer is B, not A, then what we have is a breakdown in communication between two cultures. On this point I opined at the time (June 12, 1994):

"Either we share a common language and a common rational apparatus or we do not. It is a very very scary thing when three-quarters of one ethnic group flatly disagree with three-quarters of another ethnic group about the structure of rational arguments. It is simply wrong to suppose that the white majority believed O. J. to be guilty because he was black. It is simply undeniable that the black majority believed him innocent because he was black. And—remarkably—those figures remained static throughout those endless months of testimony."

Black Americans tend to distrust white Americans (the FEMA agents were mostly white), especially if they are Republicans (the White House is white Republican)—which is why they vote over 90 percent for Democrats. But European observers of the American scene should proceed cautiously, lest they find themselves engaged in prejudiced categorical thought, which rescues no one from any rooftop, but clouds the philanthropic vision.

—UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE



"I think that what you've got is psychesomatic, so I'm referring you to a quack."

happy warrior

MARK STEYN

Future Shock

STOP me if you've heard this before, but by 2050 China will be a colossus bestriding the world like a, er, colossus, and America will be on the skids, reduced to a race of wheezing 400-pound lardbutts in faded Disney merchandise confined to their Barcaloungers. And playing Greece to Beijing's Rome will be the European Union, run by the 120-year-old Jacques Chirac. And, if you make any jokes about Chirac or his Oriental mistress, you'll be punished by one of your household's many Shanghai-manufactured Elmo and Pooh toys exported to the U.S. by the People's Republic in the early years of the century as a vast army of sleepers waiting to be activated and serve as the enforcers of the new Middle Kingdom.

Well, it might happen. And it might not. We're not very good at projecting half-a-century out. In fact, we're not very good at projecting half-a-decade out. There weren't a lot of people in 1913 predicting that by 1918 the Russian, German, Austrian, and Turkish empires would all be gone. And there weren't many experts in 1987 predicting that by 1992 the Berlin Wall, the Warsaw Pact, and the Soviet Union would all have collapsed.

So it would seem to me more likely that something sudden and convulsive will have rearranged the geopolitical order long before China completes its stately rise to global hegemon. Will the something sudden convulse China? Beats me. We might be in for a nuclear catastrophe in the Indian subcontinent or complete societal breakdown in AIDS-riddled southern Africa. But, on the other hand, if one were looking for a likely candidate for unexpected disaster, a totalitarian state of 1.3 billion people trying to manage an historically unprecedented transformation into the world's only economically viable form of Communism and with ever-widening disparities between the glittering coastal megalopolises and an impoverished rural

backwater—well, that sounds a likely candidate for something goofy.

Remember SARS? Disease-of-the-week a couple of years back. The politburo's showcase cities were infected by that vast hinterland, where the farm animals often sleep in the house and some rustic caught it from the pig in the rec room and then toddled up to town for the day. Given that the government health officials will behave just as ineptly and mendaciously as before, what if the next rurally incubated disease is that much more infectious and that much more virulent?



Young and restless

Or how about the most gender-distorted demographic cohort in global history? Since China introduced its "one child" policy in 1979, the imbalance between the sexes has increased to the point where there are 119 boys for every 100 girls. The pioneer generation of that 20 percent male surplus is reaching manhood now. Unless China's planning on becoming the first gay superpower since Sparta, what's going to happen to those young men? As a rule, large numbers of excitable lads who can't get any action are useful for manning the nuttier outposts of the jihad but not for much else.

Would you want those structural challenges? Long before 2050, China's surplus bantam cocks will have come home to roost, and spread some lethal strain of avian flu. That being so, if you're into

futurology, why not concentrate on the more imminent dates? One thing China's very good at is booting decisions a few years down the line and then using as a bargaining chip the looming deadline and expectations of its own increasing strength. For example, in 2020, the Sino-Russian border question comes up for final resolution. It's not a corner of the world many of us are reliably expert on. Indeed, despite all the talk about the inevitability of Chinese dominance, a lot of Westerners don't have any real idea where the place is. As one of the first issues of the new Parisian tabloid *L'Anti-Américain* put it, in a parodic diary entry by George W. Bush, "Ask the CIA: Where's China?"

Hey, how about that Bush? He's so dumb he can't even find the 21st-century hyperpower destined to consign him and the other Texas morons to the trash can of history on a map! In fact, it was the prime minister of Canada who last year stood up in public and declared that China was the most important nation in the southern hemisphere. If Dubya had done that, that Slate.com guy who does those lame collections of Bushisms could have retired to the Bahamas.

For the benefit of any Canuck cabinet ministers reading this, China is actually so far north it borders Russia—for 2,264 miles with a blip for Mongolia in the middle. Think of America's frontier problem with Mexico multiplied a hundred-fold and you'll get a sense of Moscow's dilemma as 2020 approaches. It signed a temporary agreement with Beijing because it simply can't afford to enforce that border. In the ever-emptier Russian east there are 16 million people and falling. In China, there are one-and-a-half billion and they need lebensraum. China is resource-poor; the Russian east contains 80 percent of that country's resources. Russia is a dying country—literally: more abortions than live births, lower male life expectancy than Bangladesh. Facing extinction, Moscow doesn't have much to barter with—except dangling the Chinese an offer that could solve several of their structural problems.

The CIA managed to miss the death of the Soviet Union. I wonder if they're doing the same with the far more consequential death of Russia. **NR**

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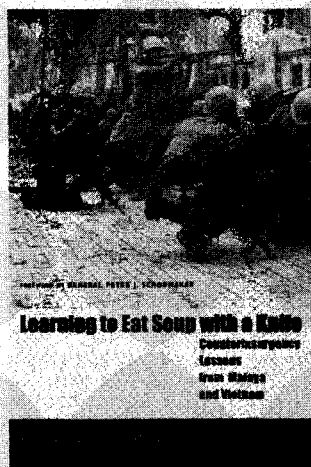
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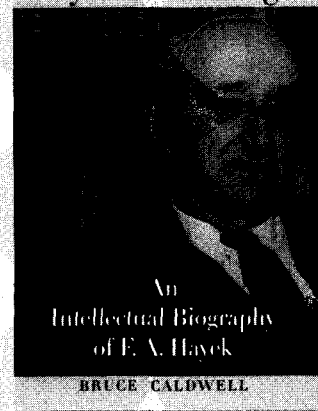
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